

The Blind Teacher
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Synonyms for Service

Granger Ricks

By the time you read this, it should be about spring holiday time. Although you will be gearing up for the final days of the school year, I hope it will be a time of refreshment for you.

Recently I was thinking about our mission as teachers as I was reading about words in the Greek New Testament that are related to service. I think you will all agree that all of these concepts surround the vocation of teaching no matter what the setting might be.

The first of these words means to work as a slave, though the privilege of service is sometimes associated with this meaning. (doulouo)

The second word is one from which we derive the English word therapy. It means to serve in a professional sense as in medical practice. It connotes a professional service that not anyone could do. This service requires qualifications. (therapeuo)

The third word means to provide service for wages. This too, of course, is a bonified service. (latreuuo)

The fourth verb means to perform official public service for the state. (leitourgeo)

The fifth word means to serve in the sense of steering a ship. This was used to apply to the steersman receiving his instructions from the officer of the watch and following

these. Again, it is clear, that this requires some skill and is therefore service in that sense. (hupereteo)

The sixth verb, together with a noun derivative, was used to describe those who prepared and served food. As time went on, the verb, often translated to minister, was used to designate those who taught doctrine and the cognate noun, often translated as deacon, was applied to those who engaged in administrative functions. Studying and teaching is like working in the kitchen. After the meal the deacons clean up the dishes and get things ready for the preparation of the next meal. (diakoneo and diakonia)

So then, what is the best of all possible worlds for a teacher? To have a kind master, a noble mentor, a generous employer, and a non-intrusive church or legislator, an understanding and helpful administration and a good can opener.

With best wishes, and may all your colleagues and administrators be cooperative as you wrap up this term and prepare for a good convention in Pittsburgh this summer.

Convention Honorarium

This is a reminder that Lynn Cooper, our speaker at last summer's breakfast, was so impressed with the work of NABT that she turned back her \$200 honorarium on the condition that it be used to enable someone to attend this year's convention. Think of this as three nights of free lodging or a wild spending spree in the exhibit hall. If you would like to be considered for the honorarium, send the reasons why you think you deserve the award to John

Buckley, in the media of your preference, by April 22. See the cover for contact information.

Teaching the Music Business

Audrey Levine

When I was a little girl and I was asked the familiar question, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" I always said, "I'm gonna be a teacher."

However, when asked that same question as a teenager, I always said, "I'm gonna be a great singer, piano player, and songwriter." It turns out that I must have been psychic because my profession includes all of the above.

Although I have been visually impaired all of my life, I had always gone to public schools. I received my undergraduate degree in music business from New York University and my masters in music performance from Hunter College in 1997.

I am currently employed as a music teacher at Manhattan Comprehensive Night & Day High School, a New York City public school. All of the students in the school are between the ages of 17 and 21, and all receive a regular New York State Regents diploma. The students who attend school between 10:15 AM and 4:15 PM are all learning English as a second language. They come from 44 different countries. The students who attend school from 5 PM to 10:45 PM are all returnees; that is, these students didn't graduate when they were supposed to. All the students take academic courses to achieve their Regents diplomas.

I teach from 1 to 8:15 PM; therefore, I work with both groups. Fortunately, I have a colleague who has an extensive background in foreign languages and is quite comfortable working with students who speak very little English. I work with the more advanced students during the day, and I have designed a specialized curriculum that the night students enjoy.

When I arrive at 12:45 PM, I teach a few students who speak limited English how to sing some American songs. We first go through the songs, defining words that they may not understand. I spend the next two periods with a student aide who reads various things to me: school mail, Billboard (the Music Industry trade magazine), or various items on the Internet (such as song lyrics).

At 3:25, the school chorus gathers for its class. We begin with some physical stretching and relaxation exercises and then sing some vocal warm-ups, and then get to our rehearsal.

From 4:15 until 5 o'clock, I become the most popular teacher in the school. Since the school day is over for the day students and not yet begun for the night students, both groups stop by to sing, or catch up on notes they missed, or just talk. I love that they come and bring their brothers, sisters, cousins, best friends, etc. If I have to use the bathroom or go to a meeting, they protest and even bang on the piano until I come back. I have to lock the piano to save it from being destroyed.

At 5 o'clock (first period for the night students), I team-teach a course called "Professional Musicianship." We are teaching the students how to play the piano, the guitar, or

sing. Most importantly, the students are learning how to sight-read, and also to write down what they hear.

My colleague goes home after this class because he comes in earlier than I do. Therefore, the night students' classes are my domain. Since the students are of the older, urban variety, they do not like to sing, and they would tune out if I gave a course on dead composers. Consequently, I designed a curriculum that teaches the various aspects of the music industry. The course is based on the premise that "Every song you hear on the radio is a product on the market." As a result, the students learn about the process of the song from the time it is born in a person's head to the time a person purchases it in a store.

The class on the music industry is my favorite because it is my brainchild. I believe that nobody else in the New York City Department of Education is teaching anything like it.

I keep my attendance records in braille. I call the students' names at the beginning of class so I know who is there and where they are sitting; a student volunteer fills in the bubble sheet for the school's records. I have a volunteer student write the notes on the board, so the entire class can get what I dictate.

In addition to my job at Manhattan Comp., I am the founder and director of Add Joy to Learning, a nonprofit program dedicated to teaching urban youth the various aspects of the music industry.

Every Friday, a guest comes in to speak about what he or she does, how he or she got to doing what they do, and the students ask questions about the career discussed. A

recent guest, for example, was a comptroller from a record label; he brought a sample Artist Royalty statement, and the students learned about how a recording artist gets paid. Future guests will include a songwriter, a studio musician, an attorney, a publicist, and other label executives. For more information about Add Joy to Learning, please visit our website at www.ajlmusic.com, or phone me at (212) 995-1137, or you can e-mail me at audrey@ajlmusic.com.

TEACHER'S AID

Frequently Asked Questions

Carla Hayes

Over the years, I have received many phone calls, letters, and E-mail messages from prospective and working blind and visually impaired teachers, teacher training personnel, and administrators who are considering the possibility of hiring blind and visually impaired teachers. It is amazing to me how many times certain questions are asked. I thought it might be helpful to publish a sampling of the questions I am frequently asked and my responses to them.

Q. How do you write on the chalkboard if you are totally blind?

A. I don't. Instead, I use the overhead projector to present much of the visual information which would normally be written on the chalkboard. Transparencies are great

because they can be independently prepared in advance, used over and over again, and filed along with a braille copy of the information which appears on the transparency. Other alternatives to writing on the chalkboard which I use include flash cards, flip charts, and posters which can be purchased or prepared with the help of a sighted person. I use bulldog clips to attach these materials to the magnetic chalkboard in my classroom. When I need to have something written on the chalkboard, I ask a reliable student to be my scribe and I dictate the information that I need to post.

Q. As a blind teacher, how do you handle classroom discipline?

A. I start by having a regular seating chart for my students so that I know where each student is sitting. This makes it easier to identify and, if necessary, separate troublemakers. Instead of sitting behind my desk while teaching, I constantly move around the classroom. Sometimes, just my mere proximity to the students is enough to prevent potential discipline problems.

Another useful strategy is to divide the class period into two or three shorter activities rather than one long one. By doing this, students are less likely to become bored and get into trouble. Finally, I have only four or five classroom rules which are easy for the students to remember. I enforce these rules rigidly. I try to make the consequences for breaking the rules severe enough that the students will not want to misbehave again.

Q. How do you handle non-teaching duties which require sight?

A. I use the help of a sighted aide or reader to help me perform certain tasks, such as attendance records, administrative paperwork, and writing grades on report cards. There are other duties which I don't necessarily have to perform, such as cafeteria and bus duty. I arrange with the principal and other staff members to exchange these duties for others which do not require sight. In this manner, I am always pulling my load as a staff member.

Q. As a blind teacher, how do you prevent your students from cheating on tests?

A. It is important to acknowledge that even sighted teachers must deal with cheating from time to time. It is true that some students may be more likely to try cheating with a blind teacher, but there are strategies which can lessen this problem.

First, I always have a sighted person to monitor tests. This person can help to make sure that all textbooks and notes are put away, students are separated as much as possible during the test, and that they are not looking off each other's papers. Second, I find it helpful to give more than one form of the test and alternate the forms of the test when distributing them, making it more difficult for students to copy answers from their classmates' papers. Third, I identify possible cheating problems by looking for telltale trends, such as more than one student having the same unlikely answers to test questions, changes in the quality of students' work, etc. Fourth, when I know for certain that cheating has occurred, there are severe consequences for

those involved. This, alone, can act as a deterrent for students who may consider cheating in the future.

Q. As a blind teacher, how do you correct all the print tests, papers, and homework assignments that your students must complete?

A. My reader helps me to correct all the tests and papers which are done for a grade. Having an answer key for each objective test speeds the process because she doesn't have to read every test paper to me. I have students read their essays and compositions on tape in addition to turning in the print copy. Then, my reader corrects them for spelling and punctuation, and I correct them for pronunciation, grammar, and content and assign the final grade. Rather than correcting every homework paper, I allow students to correct each other's assignments, assign a grade on the basis of how students answer selected questions from the assignment orally, and occasionally collect and grade certain assignments without announcing it in advance. By using these strategies, all the work gets done and the students are evaluated and graded in a fair manner.

These are only five of the questions which I am asked most frequently and my answers. Perhaps you would like to offer your own answers to these questions, or ask questions of your own to be published in future columns. Perhaps you want to share useful resources in the Bulletin Board column. If so, contact me at: 230 Robinhood Lane, McMurray, PA 15317. Phone: (724) 941-8184. E-mail: lengualconcentric.net.

The Electronic Voyeur

John Buckley

I was interviewing for my first job and things were going well. I was sure I was about to be offered the position when the Department Chair said, "Do you think you could teach a couple of sections of ...?" I had always thought of myself as impeccably honest, but, with the brazenness of a member of Cosa Nostra under oath, I answered, "Of course." After all, I hadn't been asked if I knew anything about the subject, only could I teach it, and I had three months to learn. Little did I know how common this form of academic perjury is.

A quarter of a century ago, I had to scramble to assemble and read material, design a syllabus, and, in short, create a class from scratch. Placed in the same situation today (and frequently teachers are given even less time than this before having to teach a course for the first time), my task would be infinitely easier and the final product far better.

If you can search the Internet for computer parts, books, or old baseball cards, why not course syllabi? Of what value is someone else's syllabus? This form of electronic voyeurism permits you to see what texts are selected, assignments given, grading standards presented, subjects covered, course objectives employed, and exam and review questions used. In short, the Internet presents the opportunity to borrow from some of the best and most creative people teaching your subject.

To test this theory, I recently tried to locate syllabi for a course in propaganda, a class I had taught for over 10 years. I began by simply entering "syllabus" and

"propaganda" in the search box of Google.com's advanced search page. (I recommend Google's advanced search because it takes only 15-20 minutes to master and yields high-quality results.) Within two seconds, I had over 10,000 hits. The syllabus of the course I had taught was ranked the most relevant result; the syllabus of a leading authority in the field was second, and so on. While there were inevitably some extraneous hits, the large majority were on target, ranging from the Ivy League to community colleges. Because I had taught in a Department of Communication, by adding "persuasion" to a second search, I reduced the number of hits to 1,000. This number is made more manageable when it is realized that Google rank orders results in terms of their relevance.

Alternatively, suppose you were scheduled to teach American literature, a truly vast subject area, for the first time. What types of readings should you assign? By entering "syllabus," "American literature," "assignments," and "readings," you are given over 16,000 hits, the overwhelming majority presenting an answer to this question. Some of the courses are more specialized than your introductory class will be, however. Because you think it important that you cover Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, and Henry David Thoreau, you repeat the same search but this time add "Hawthorne," "Melville," and "Thoreau." The number of hits drops to 576. Of course, you can keep narrowing the search to more carefully target those syllabi that correspond to your needs.

If, at this point, you are saying to yourself, "This is all well and good, but I teach middle school or high school," the

same strategy will work for you. For example, by entering "syllabus," "American literature," and "high school," Google yields over 16,000 hits. These include: numerous syllabi from AP classes, summary notes of class lectures, review and study questions, and reading assignments. Several school districts apparently require all instructors to post syllabi online. It was my impression that these posted syllabi are distinctly above average. The only disadvantage of this type of searching was that, while materials for advanced courses were plentiful, it was more difficult to find syllabi for "average" classes.

But suppose you have been teaching a class for some time, are basically pleased with how it goes, but would like to make more effective use of a particular assignment. Google has a unique command that can help with this problem. The "link" command, followed immediately by the name of a site, will give all of the other sites that link to it. For example, link:acb.org will give all sites that link to the American Council of the Blind's Web site. What use is this? Suppose you wanted to make better use of a section of the course that deals with Martin Luther King's "I Have A Dream" speech. First, you can quickly locate a text of the speech by searching for "I Have A Dream" and "text." Then, search for all sites that link to the site with the text with the "link" command, for example: link:kingtext.org Doing this will yield bibliographies, biographies, lesson plans (for elementary to high school), teacher guides, and materials for a distance learning course. The different sites deal with King and the speech from various perspectives--historical event, charismatic leadership, literature, public speaking, etc.

In sum, the Internet makes it possible to communicate vicariously with large numbers of your colleagues about the courses you teach in common. You can see what they teach and how they teach it. It is an electronic community open to everyone; visual impairment is not a barrier.

Bulletin Board

Compiled by Carla Hayes

Perhaps you would like to take advantage of the Internet and Email but you don't always have access to a computer. Well, here's a new service just for you! InternetSpeech is a service which allows you to surf the Net, send and receive Email and even do some online shopping from any touchtone phone. Normally, the service costs \$9.95 a month when calling a San Jose number, but service is unlimited, or \$19.95 when calling a toll-free number for service with a limit of 3 hours a month. However, I am offering a special promotion through Lengua-Learn Communications in which the service will cost \$8.95 for unlimited toll service and \$18.95 for limited toll-free service. If you choose the limited toll-free service, you can purchase additional 30-minute blocks of time for \$2.50 each. For more information or a demonstration, call me at: (724) 941-8184.

* * *

There is an international online discussion group for blind teachers. It was begun in December of 2001 by a gentleman in Pakistan. Most of the discussion is from

students but the group disseminates a lot of valuable information. John Buckley has been following it for several months and thinks it is good. To subscribe, send a blank Email message (including the subject) to: blindteachers-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.

* * *

The Braille Resource Literacy Center produces a wide variety of children's books in uncontracted, contracted, double-spaced, single-sided and non-interpoint formats. The print equivalent of each line appears on the left-hand page. Books cost \$6.00 for each title. For a catalog, write: The Braille Resource and Literacy Center, 1094 South 350 West, Orem, UT 84058. Phone: 801-224-3334.

* * *

travelog.com (phone 866-538-7868), offers audio tours on tape or CD including maps and discount cards for guided tours in the car. Although these products were primarily designed for vacation travelers, they may be useful in the classroom for social studies teachers. For more information, check out their website or call the toll-free number.

* * *

Another interesting teaching aid for social studies teachers is the Tactile Globe. It measures 15 inches. Oceans and

continents are marked in Grade 1 Braille and large print. Continents can be removed. The Tactile Globe is available from the Royal National Institute for the Blind. For more information, visit www.rnib.org.

* * *

Scan And Read Software will change written text into spoken language. It is free to schools, libraries and nonprofit training organizations, and \$89.00 to consumers. It works with Windows 98 and later operating systems and Twain flatbed scanners. It reads in 17 different voices and accommodates most languages spoken in the western hemisphere. For more information, call: 517-668-8188.

Thoughts On Teaching

The following quotations on teaching and education range from the sublime to the ridiculous. You may find them worth reviewing after a long day in the classroom. They may serve to keep things in perspective or remind you why you were attracted to the profession in the first place.

"Education's purpose is to replace an empty mind with an open one."

Malcolm S. Forbes, publisher

"Education costs money, but so does ignorance."

Sir Claude Moser

"You can teach a lesson for a day, but if you teach curiosity, you teach for a lifetime."

Anonymous

"It is better to build children than repair adults."

Anonymous

"Having served on various committees, I have drawn up a list of rules: Never arrive on time; this stamps you as a beginner. Don't say anything until the meeting is half over; this stamps you as being wise. Be as vague as possible; this avoids irritating the others. When in doubt, suggest that a subcommittee be appointed. Be the first to move for adjournment; this will make you popular; it's what everyone is waiting for."

Harry Chapman

"In a completely rational society, the best of us would aspire to be teachers and the rest of us would have to settle for something less, because passing civilization along from one generation to the next ought to be the highest honor and highest responsibility anyone could have."

Lee Iacocca, Chairman of Chrysler Corporation

"You can pay people to teach, but you can't pay them to care."

Marva Collins, educator

"In years to come a child may forget what you taught them, but will always remember how you made them feel."

Anonymous

"The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires."

William Arthur Ward

"The secret of education is respecting the pupil."

Ralph Waldo Emerson

"Those who can do. Those who can't teach. Those who can't teach train teachers. Those who can't train teachers write teacher training textbooks. Those who can't write teacher training textbooks write state assessment tests."

Steve Nordby

"Teaching is not a lost art, but the regard for it is a lost tradition."

Jacques Barzun, historian

"Teachers who require respect receive little, but those who show respect gain a great deal."

Anonymous high school student

"Everything should be made as simple as possible, but not simpler."

Albert Einstein

"In the first place God made idiots. This was for practice. Then He made school boards."

Mark Twain

"Your learning is useless to you till you have lost your text-books, burnt your lecture notes, and forgotten the minutiae which you learnt by heart for the examination."

Alfred North Whitehead, mathematician and philosopher

"Of course, Behaviorism "works." So does torture. Give me a no-nonsense, down-to-earth behaviorist, a few drugs, and

simple electrical appliances, and in six months I will have him reciting the Athanasian Creed in public."

W. H. Auden, poet and critic

"Tell me and I may forget. Show me and I may remember. Involve me and I will understand."

Chinese proverb

"If you think education is expensive, try ignorance."

Derek Bok, President of Harvard University

Because computer technology is so much a part of the educational experience, we also include the following quotations:

"640K ought to be enough for anybody."

Bill Gates, in 1981

"If the automobile had followed the same development cycle as the computer, a Rolls-Royce would today cost \$100, get a million miles per gallon, and explode once a year, killing everyone inside."

Robert X. Cringely, Info World

From the Back of the Class

A kindergarten teacher happened to be out one day when one of her students was to have his tonsils removed. The teacher had neglected to tell the class, but, apparently, the aide had made the announcement because, when the teacher returned to the class the next day, one particularly precocious little boy came running up and screamed, "You

weren't here yesterday, and Bobby had his testicles removed!"

* * *

When a second-grade teacher, who lived in the South, asked a student to use the word "course" in a sentence, he answered, "Our music teacher sings in a course."

* * *

[A first-grade teacher in Miami tells the following story about her favorite show-and-tell.]

Usually, show-and-tell is pretty tame. Kids bring in pet turtles, model airplanes, pictures of fish they catch, stuff like that. And I never place any boundaries or limitations on them. If they want to lug it to school and talk about it, they're welcome.

One day Erica, a very bright, very outgoing little girl, takes her turn and waddles up to the front of the class with a pillow stuffed under her sweater. She holds up a snapshot of an infant.

"This is Luke, my baby brother, and I'm going to tell you about his birthday. First, Mommy and Daddy made him as a symbol of their love, and then Daddy put a seed in my mother's stomach, and Luke grew in there. He ate for nine months through an umbrella cord."

She's standing there with her hands on the pillow, and I'm trying not to laugh and wishing I had a video camera rolling. The kids are watching her in amazement.

"Then, about two Saturdays ago, my mother starts going, 'Oh, oh, oh!'" Erica puts a hand behind her back and groans.

"She walked around the house for, like, an hour, 'Oh, oh, oh!'" Now the kid's doing this hysterical duck-walk, holding her back and groaning.

"My father called the middle wife. She delivers babies, but she doesn't have a sign on the car like the Domino's man. They got my mother to lie down in bed like this." Erica lies down with her back against the wall.

"And then, pop! My mother had this bag of water she kept in there in case he got thirsty, and it just blew up and spilled all over the bed, like psshhheew!" The kid with her little hands is miming water flowing away. It was too much!

"Then the middle wife starts going, 'push, push' and 'breathe, breathe.' They start counting, but they never even got past ten. Then, all of a sudden, out comes my brother. He was covered in yucky stuff they said was from the play-center, so there must be a lot of stuff inside there."

Then Erica stood up, took a big theatrical bow and returned to her seat. I'm sure I applauded the loudest. Ever since then, if it's show-and-tell day, I bring my camcorder."

* * *

A UCLA freshman, who was taking U.S. Government for the third time, was asked by her professor if she knew what the Roe vs. Wade decision was. She sat for some time pondering the question and finally sighed and said, "I think

that is the decision George Washington made prior to crossing the Delaware!"

* * *

At The last minute, a kindergartener suddenly announced just before school that she needed to take a clean tee shirt to class. She told her parents the teacher was going to iron an anti-drug message on it. Her mother frantically swept through the girl's room, finding nothing usable but one tee shirt that already had something printed on one side. She sent it off to school with her daughter. That afternoon, the girl returned and happily showed off her shirt. On one side it said, "Families are Forever" and, on the other, "Be Smart, Don't Start."

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The Class of 2006 Granger Ricks

Been thinking about how out of touch you are lately; how your younger students seem to regard you as an alien? Just in case you weren't feeling old enough today, this will certainly change things.

Each year the staff at Beloit College in Wisconsin puts together a list to try to give the faculty a sense of the perspective of that year's incoming freshmen. Here is a composite of some of the items in the last two lists.

1. A "hotline" is a consumer service rather than a phone used to avoid accidental nuclear war.
2. Cars have always had air bags and CD players.
3. "Big Brother" is a television show.
4. Cyberspace has always existed.
5. There has been only one Pope in their lifetime.
6. Tiananmen Square means nothing to them.

7. Bottle caps have always been screw off and plastic.
8. Atari predates them, as do vinyl albums.
9. The statement "You sound like a broken record" means nothing to them. They have never owned a record player.
10. They have likely never played Pac Man and have never heard of Pong.
11. We have always been able to choose our long-distance carriers.
12. They have always had an answering machine.
13. Most have never seen a TV set with only 13 channels, nor have seen a black and white TV.
14. They have always had cable.
15. There have always been VCRs, but they have no idea what BETA was.
16. They cannot fathom not having a remote control.
17. They don't know what a cloth baby diaper is.
18. George Foreman has always been a barbecue grill salesman.
19. Jay Leno has always been on the Tonight Show.
20. They have no idea when or why Jordache jeans were cool.
21. Popcorn has always been cooked in the microwave.
22. They never took a swim and thought about "Jaws."
23. The United States and the Soviets have always been partners in space.
24. The Vietnam War is as ancient history to them as World War I, World War II, and the Civil War.
25. They have no idea that Americans were ever held hostage in Iran.
26. They can't imagine what hard contact lenses are.

27. They never heard: "Where's the beef?" or "I'd walk a mile for a Camel."
28. They do not care who shot J. R. and have no idea who J. R. was.
29. Hip-hop and rap have always been popular musical forms.
30. Kansas, Chicago, Boston, America, and Alabama are places, not bands.
31. There has always been MTV.
32. They grew up in minivans.
33. They don't have a clue how to use a typewriter.

Save this list for the start of school next fall.

Digital Books: The Future Is Now

John Buckley

It had been some time since I had ordered a book from RFB&D, and so, when I began reading the first tape, I was reminded of how frustrating the experience could be. I have always been ambivalent about RFB&D's books because, while I appreciate the efforts of the volunteers and the high standards of the staff, I have felt the technology, from flexible disks to reel-to-reel tapes to audio cassettes, left a lot to be desired. For this reason, when I noticed that several of the books I had received were also on CD, I decided to take the plunge into the twenty-first century and ordered three of these digital books and the software for reading them.

Technology has always reminded me of that line from a children's nursery rhyme: "When it is good, it is very, very

good, and, when it is bad, it is horrid." Fortunately, the digital book technology is very, very good.

RFB&D offers two ways to read its new digital books. Two different models of CD machines offer portability and top of the line features but at steep prices (\$500 and \$1,000 respectively). Alternatively, two software programs are available for either \$109 or \$50. Understanding that the \$50 program was the bare-bones version, I chose the \$109 Victor Reader Soft by Visuaid.

Victor Reader is loaded like any other software on your computer and comes with "getting started" and "reference guide" files that you can read from the disk when it is installed. To say that the speech is excellent doesn't begin to do it justice. No previous technology comes close to the experience of reading a digital book.

Both the Victor Reader and its \$50 counterpart, TPB software, have a number of attractive features in common. You can navigate a book by page, chapter, or section. Gone are the days when you have to waste time hunting the page you want on a cassette. Simply type in the page number, enter, and you're there. Alternatively, you can search for a word in a document just as you would in Windows by selecting control F and typing whatever you are looking for. You can jump forward in a book by holding down the F key and rewind by doing the same thing with the R key. In addition, the speaking rate may be changed on the fly with S and shift S; however, the only exhibit of the TPB I have heard did not have this feature. Best of all, and this is hard to imagine unless you have heard it, increasing the speaking rate is done without the "Donald Duck" effect.

(This is done by electronically cutting out the dead spaces between words as is being done in some current radio commercials.) You can also place "bookmarks" anywhere in the text (as many as 8,000 in Victor Reader and 200 in TPB) to enable you to quickly return to important material. Finally, you can use either drop down menus or short-cut keys to accomplish these and many other tasks.

The Victor Reader also has some features not available in the TPB. First, it has a "key describer" function, which is helpful when you are learning to use the software.

Moreover, it has more and, for my money, more convenient supporting documentation. Finally, Victor Reader saves user preferences such as bookmarks.

There are a few disadvantages to the Victor Reader, however. Actually, they are more like annoyances. While the supporting documentation is helpful in getting started, it makes the process sound more complicated and intimidating than it really is. RFB&D provides a phone number for technical support, which I found to be both helpful and pleasant, which is no small matter. Of more importance is the inability to cut and copy the text. While this is understandable in light of copyright restrictions, it makes note taking cumbersome. While Victor reader provides a feature for taking notes without leaving the program, it has to be done without the use of either the Victor Reader speech or your own screen reader program. As a result, you have no way of monitoring what you are writing. In order to read your notes, you must turn off Victor Reader and turn on your screen reader. I quickly discovered it easier to take notes by switching to my favorite word

processing program, turning on my screen reader, and entering notes as I would normally. (Incidentally, this was facilitated by creating a shortcut key to bring up the speech program.) These annoyances were, however, a small price to pay for the speed, convenience, and quality of the digital reader.

For anyone using speech on their computer, the requirements of the software will probably not be a problem. The most critical requirements are a Windows 98/2000/NT/ME/XP operating system, 64 MB of RAM, Pentium 166 MHz or higher processor, and 60 MB of hard disk space for the Victor Reader and 30 MB for TPB. For additional information, go to <http://www.rfbd.org> and select the relevant links.

An RFB&D staff member who is familiar with the digital books program reports that a new \$250 version of the hardware model of the reader will be available soon. In addition, she says, "We are about 99.9% certain that NLS will use this same technology when it begins producing digital books for the Talking Books program."

Digital books have been ballyhooed so much in recent years that it is tempting to think that nothing could live up to the advanced publicity. This is one time, however, when the advanced press is justified.

TEACHERS' FEATURES for CONVENTION 2003

Carla Hayes

The National Association of Blind Teachers, NABT, has planned an exciting program for the 2003 ACB Convention in Pittsburgh, PA. Here is our agenda for the week.

We will begin our activities with our annual breakfast and program on Sunday, July 6 from 8 to 9:30 AM. The program topic will be "Blindness: Not a Tragedy But a Transforming Experience." The speaker will be Sally Alexander, author of the children's book, *Mommie Can't See Me*, and several other books. Since this is such a universal topic, we are sure that many people will want to attend. The program will be followed by the NABT board meeting from 9:30 to 11:00 AM. This meeting is open to everyone.

On Monday, July 7 at 1:30 PM, NABT and the National Alliance of Blind Students (NABS) will join forces to present a program about "Out-of-Sight Tips For Dating Blind--Not Necessarily Blind Dating." The program presenter will be Lynn Cooper, the image awareness consultant and motivational speaker often featured on "ACB Reports." She will give dating advice specifically designed for blind and visually impaired people.

On Tuesday, July 8 from 1:30 to 2:30 PM, we will have our annual business meeting. Come and meet old friends and share your ideas for the future of NABT. Then, at 2:30, we will present a program on another timely topic in conjunction with the National Association of Parents of the Visually Impaired (NAPVI). It will be a panel discussion entitled "Educational Options for Blind and Visually Impaired Children." Panelists will include Dr. Janet Simon, teacher at the Western Pennsylvania School for Blind Children; Patty Slaby, itinerant teacher, River Falls, WI; Marcia Dresser, SEEM Collaborative, Reading, MA; and a parent representative from NAPVI (to be announced).

Wouldn't you agree that we have planned an interesting and informative agenda for this year's convention? Come and join us, be inspired, learn new things, and let your voice be heard!

NABT Member Wins Teaching Award

Paula Strecher, long-time NABT member, is one of ten Chicago-area winners of the 2003 Golden Apple Award for Excellence in Teaching in pre-kindergarten through fifth grade. The Golden Apple Foundation is dedicated to recognizing and developing excellence in teaching.

More than 1,100 teachers from three Chicago-area counties were nominated for the award, which was first presented in 1986. The awards selection committee is comprised of more than 70 Chicago-area educators. Two committee members observed each of the 33 finalists in the classroom and interviewed their principal and selected colleagues, parents and students.

Paula teaches visually-impaired kindergarten and first-grade students. "I want to influence the development of my students in my classroom by serving as a positive role model," she said. "I feel as though there is a special bond between us because of the disability we share. I want my students to succeed in working up to their potentials. This is why I work so diligently at laying the basic foundation of teaching proficiency in academics as well as in the area of blindness-specific skills to help my students eventually grow into happy, well-adjusted, and successful adults."

Each of the ten Golden Apple Award winners will receive a tuition-free fall-term sabbatical at Northwestern University, \$2,500, a personal computer from Apple, and induction into the Golden Apple Academy, which now numbers 170 expert teachers who work together to ensure that "all children have the excellent teachers they deserve."

TEACHER'S AID
Avoiding The End Of Term Crunch
Carla Hayes

For the most part, I love teaching. I can't describe the feeling of satisfaction I get from nurturing my students and watching them make progress and learn new things. The one aspect of my job that I dislike is the end of a marking period or school year. There is just too much to do and too little time to get it done. Over the years, I have come up with a few strategies which have helped to ease the pressure during these highly stressful times. Perhaps some of them could work for you.

One of the hardest tasks is getting all the final tests and papers corrected and the grades recorded in time for report cards. This can be especially difficult for a blind teacher who must rely on a sighted person to read the papers aloud so that they can be corrected. Of course, this task takes longer for us to do than for our sighted colleagues. So, anything we can do to save time will be helpful. There are several ways that I have resolved this problem for myself.

First, I give shorter finals and essays, reserving longer tests and papers for earlier in the term when there is more time.

By the end of the term, I know what my students know or don't know; so, longer evaluations are often unnecessary. Using this method takes a lot of pressure off me as a teacher and makes life easier for my students who must prepare for finals in several classes. If a comprehensive final exam is necessary and your school has a Scantron machine, consider giving a longer test which consists of multiple choice, matching, true/false, and fill-in-the-blank items. Then, use the Scantron to grade the test. The only thing your reader will have to do is read the test results to you so that you can record the grades. Although I haven't used this method recently because my current school doesn't have a Scantron, I have found it to be a great time saver at the end of a marking period when a machine was available to me.

Another alternative is replacing the written final examination with a major oral presentation. This method can be used in almost any subject and can take the form of a speech, demonstration, debate, performance, foreign language dialog, or an audio/visual presentation. Such a presentation can be graded using a rubric system in which points are assigned for each grading criterion. If you decide to use this evaluation method, be sure that the grade carries as much weight as a written test grade. Otherwise, some of your students may not take it as seriously as a written test. This type of evaluation has several advantages over a written final. First, it can be graded more quickly and independently, which means a lot at the end of the term when time is of the essence. Second, it gives you the opportunity to measure skills which cannot be measured on a typical written examination. Some of these skills include

oral language, public speaking skills, designing audio/visuals for presentations, the ability to demonstrate skills and procedures to others, creativity, and, in the case of group projects, the ability to collaborate with others and work cooperatively. One of the most important advantages of oral presentations is that they give students who perform poorly on written tests or those who may not do well in spelling, punctuation, and penmanship an opportunity to prove what they know. Of course, in foreign language instruction, measuring oral skills is just as important as measuring written skills. So, I use this method a lot and it works well for me.

Whether you give oral or written final examinations, students' final grades must be computed and reported so that they can be recorded on report cards. This can be a time-consuming task. However, there are ways to save time at the end of the term.

First, instead of doing all your grades after finals, start working on grades a week or two before finals. Add all the points that each student has received for all the tests, papers, and other assignments, excluding the final, and record that score. Then, figure out and write down your grading scale for the entire term. This method saves a tremendous amount of time because, after finals have been given and graded, all you have to do is add two numbers together to compute a student's grade for the entire term. Second, design templates on the computer for reporting grades. Using a computer will allow you to do this task much more quickly, efficiently, and independently.

Other end of the year chores include those little, yet time-consuming incidentals, such as collecting and cataloging books, putting away teaching supplies and equipment, completing administrative forms, and general classroom clean-up. I use two strategies to get these tasks done. First, I start on them as early as possible so that everything isn't left until the last week of the term. Second, I allow reliable students to help with such things as taking down bulletin board displays, scrubbing the chalkboard, and putting away books. Not only does this save time for me, but it teaches students to be more responsible and helpful.

There is a lot to do at the end of a term or school year. However, with experimentation and imagination, you can find efficient ways to get all the work done. Then, you and your students will not be under so much pressure.

BULLETIN BOARD

Compiled by Carla Hayes

With summer approaching and the academic year drawing to a close, you may have more time for personal reading and research, or collecting reading materials to use in the classroom. Here are a few resources to help you along these lines.

* * *

For large print books, contact: Guild for the Blind, 180 N. Michigan, Chicago, IL 60601. Phone: (312) 236-8569. FAX:

312-236-8128.

Another large print publisher is the Large Print Bookshop, P.O.

Box 5375, Englewood, CO 80155. Phone: (303) 721-7511. FAX:

303-721-7512.

For braille readers, try the William A. Thomas Braille Bookstore, Braille International, Inc. 3290 S.E. Slater Street, Stuart, FL 34997. Phone: (561) 286-8366. FAX: 561-286-8909. Toll Free: (800) 336-3142. Email: braillegate.net.

Their catalog contains fiction, nonfiction, poetry, educational books and much more for adults and children.

I CAN SEE BOOKS has a braille bookstore which contains over 500 books for people of all ages and interests. For more information, call their toll-free number: (800) 559-8299. View their catalog by visiting their Web site:

www.icanseebooks.com. Their Email address is:

info@icanseebooks.com.

If audio is more your speed, (pardon the pun), check out Audio Editions for books on cassette and CD. Categories include:

Fiction, Nonfiction, Classics, Self Help, History, Languages, Radio Drama and much more. For more information, contact: Audio Editions, P.O. Box 6930, Auburn, CA 95604.

Phone: (800) 231-4261 FAX: 800-882-1840. Web site:

www.audioedition.com. As an added convenience, their

catalog is also available on four-track tone-indexed cassette from: Home Readers, 604 West Hulett, Edgerton, KS

66021. Phone: (877) 814-7323. Web Site:
www.homereaders.com. Email: homereadaccessus.net.

"Psychology Today," "Smithsonian," and several other magazines are available on tape on a paid subscription basis from: Recorded Periodicals, Associated Services for the Blind, 919 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107 (215) 627-0600 ext 3206.

If you don't mind being tethered to a computer, you might want to venture online for some interesting reading opportunities. Patrons of the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped are eligible to subscribe to Web-Braille. Posted on the NLS Web site are all the books and magazines produced in English Grade 2 Braille for the National Library Service since the early 1990's. The books and magazines are stored in BRF files which can be downloaded and then embossed or read using a braille-aware device such as a notetaker or Braille display. For more information or to register for Web-Braille, contact your local NLS branch.

The oldest and probably one of the most well-known producers of plain format Etext books and documents is Project Gutenberg. On their Web site, you will find a plethora of public domain Etext documents and books including several classics for free downloading. Their URL is www.gutenberg.net.

* * *

Pulse Data is excited to announce the launch of the BrailleNote Club, a new initiative designed to encourage

BrailleNote and VoiceNote users between the ages of 7 and 17 to interact with each other.

Anyone who joins this exclusive club will receive a fantastic free BN Club Members Pack. Club members will be able to email each other helpful tips on how to use their BrailleNotes and VoiceNotes; swap educational tools, e-books, and favourite websites; and contribute stories, essays and poems.

To join, just go to <http://www.pulsedata.org/BNClub.asp> and fill in the membership form. We'll put you in touch with other BrailleNote and VoiceNote users worldwide.

With Regards,

Larry L. Lewis, Jr.

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E-mail: larryl@pulsedata.com

* * *

I have listed only a few sources of reading materials to get you started and I will bring you information about additional resources in future columns. Meanwhile, if you know of any good resources for reading materials, educational aids, and valuable services for teachers and students, please contact me at 230 Robinhood Lane, McMurray, PA 15317. Phone: (724) 941-8184. Email:

The History of the World

Richard Lederer

For the next few issues of The Blind Teacher, space permitting, we will reprint "The History of the World." Richard Lederer of St. Paul's School, who first published this essay, has written:

"One of the fringe benefits of being an English or History teacher is receiving the occasional Jewel of a student blooper in an essay. I have pasted together the following "history" of the world from certifiably genuine student bloopers collected by teachers throughout the United States, from eighth grade through college level. Read carefully, and you will learn a lot."

* * *

The inhabitants of Egypt were called mummies. They lived in the Sarah Dessert and traveled by Camelot. The climate of the Sarah is such that the inhabitants have to live elsewhere, so certain areas of the dessert are cultivated by irritation. The Egyptians built the Pyramids in the shape of a huge triangular cube. The Pyramids are a range of mountains between France and Spain.

* * *

The Bible is full of interesting caricatures. In the first book of the Bible, Guinesses, Adam and Eve were created from an apple tree. One of their children, Cain, asked "Am I my brother's son?" God asked Abraham to sacrifice Issac on Mount Montezuma. Jacob, son of Issac, stole his brother's birthmark. Jacob was a partiarch who brought up his twelve sons to be partiarchs, but they did not take to it. One of Jacob's sons, Joseph, gave refuse to the Israelites.

* * *

Pharaoh forced the Hebrew slaves to make bread without straw. Moses led them to the Red Sea, where they made unleavened bread, which is bread made without any ingredients. Afterwards, Moses went up on Mount Cyanide to get the ten commandments. David was a Hebrew king skilled at playing the liar. He fought with the Philatelists, a race of people who lived in Biblical times. Solomon, one of David's sons, had 500 wives and 500 porcupines.

* * *

Without the Greeks, we wouldn't have history. The Greeks invented three kinds of columns--Corinthian, Doric and Ironic. They also had myths. A myth is a female moth. One myth says that the mother of Achilles dipped him in the River Stynx until he became intolerable. Achilles appears in "The Illiad", by Homer. Homer also wrote the "Oddity", in which Penelope was the last hardship that Ulysses endured on his journey. Actually, Homer was not written by Homer but by another man of that name.

* * *

Socrates was a famous Greek teacher who went around giving people advice. They killed him. Socrates died from an overdose of wedlock. In the Olympic Games, Greeks ran races, jumped, hurled the biscuits, and threw the java. The reward to the victor was a coral wreath. The government of Athens was democratic because the people took the law into their own hands. There were no wars in Greece, as the mountains were so high that they couldn't climb over to see what their neighbors were doing. When they fought the Parisians, the Greeks were outnumbered because the Parisians had more men.

* * *

Eventually, the Ramons conquered the Geeks. History call people Romans because they never stayed in one place for very long. At Roman banquets, the guests wore garlic in their hair. Julius Caesar extinguished himself on the battlefields of Gaul. The Ides of March killed him because they thought he was going to be made king. Nero was a cruel tyranny who would torture his poor subjects by playing the fiddle to them.

From the Back of the Class

A fifth grade student asked the teacher how to spell "piranha." She told him she was unsure. To her delight, he went to the dictionary to solve his problem. That's when she

overheard another pupil say to him: "Why bother to look it up? She doesn't know how to spell it anyway."

* * *

The children had all been photographed, and the teacher was trying to persuade them each to buy a copy of the class picture. She told them, "Just think how nice it will be to look at it when you are all grown up and say, 'There's Jennifer; she's a lawyer,' or 'That's Michael; he's a doctor.'" A small voice at the back of the room rang out: "And there's the teacher; she's dead."

* * *

The following sign was posted on a bulletin board at Harvard University.

Top Five Lies Told by Teaching Assistants:

5. I'm not going to grant any extensions.
4. Call me any time. I'm always available.
3. It doesn't matter what I think; write what you believe.
2. Think of the midterm as a diagnostic tool.
1. My other section is much better prepared than you guys.

* * *

In the third grade math class, there was a problem that said: "A girl had six dimes. She gave her sister three. Write a

question for this problem." Two of the students wrote: "Why would she give her sister anything?"

* * *

Below is the answering machine message the Pacific Palisades High School staff unanimously voted to record on their school telephone answering system.

"Hello! You have reached the automated answering service of your school. In order to assist you in connecting to the right staff member, please listen to all your options before making a selection.

To lie about why your child is absent, press 1.

To make excuses for why your child did not do his work, press 2.

To complain about what we do, press 3.

To cuss out staff members, press 4.

To ask why you didn't get information that was already enclosed in your newsletter and several flyers mailed to you, press 5.

If you want us to raise your child, press 6.

If you want to reach out and touch, slap, or hit someone, press 7.

To request another teacher for the third time this year, press 8.

To complain about bus transportation, press 9.

To complain about school lunches, press 0.

If you realize this is the real world and your child must be accountable and responsible for his/her own behavior, class work, and homework and that it's not the teachers' fault for your child(ren)'s lack of effort, hang up and have a nice day!"

* * *

The junior class was studying the development of the auto industry. The teacher had emphasized the role played by Henry Ford, whose assembly lines decreased production costs. At the end of the unit, she gave a test which included the question: "What did Henry Ford invent that made buying a car more affordable?" One of the students answered: "0% financing."

* * *

Little Melissa attended Hebrew school. One day in early February, after a discussion of God's love, she asked, "Since Valentine's Day is for a Christian saint and we're Jewish, will God get mad at me for giving someone a valentine?"

Her teacher thought a bit, then said, "No, I don't think God would get mad. Who do you want to give a valentine to?"

"Osama bin Laden," she said.

"Why Osama bin Laden?" her teacher asked in shock.

"Well," she said, "I thought that if a little American Jewish girl could have enough love to give Osama a valentine, he

might start to think that maybe we're not all bad and maybe start loving people a little bit. And if other kids saw what I did and sent valentines to Osama, he'd love everyone a lot. And then he'd start going all over the place to tell everyone how much he loved them and how he didn't hate anyone anymore."

Her teacher's heart swelled and she looked at Melissa with newfound pride. "Melissa, that's the most wonderful thing I've ever heard."

"I know," Melissa said, "and once that gets him out in the open, the Marines could blow the crap out of him."

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello, everyone! I hope your first semester of school has gone well. I unexpectedly got some new students, and my job is now full-time. As a result of my new responsibilities and very hectic schedule, I haven't had the time to devote to NABT that I would like. That will change after Christmas, though, now that I finally have a handle on things. I appreciate your indulgence, and I'm very grateful to our wonderful officers and Board of Directors for picking up the slack.

Speaking of your officers, we'll be holding our midwinter conference call in early February. Be sure to contact anyone on the Board if you have something you'd like us to discuss. Also, I'm planning to attend the ACB presidents meeting in Birmingham in February, so if you have concerns related to ACB that you'd like me to bring up, just let me know.

In closing, I wish you a blessed and merry Christmas, and a happy Hanukkah. May at least one of your fondest dreams come true in 2004.

--Marcia Dresser

INTERNET SEARCHING 101

John Buckley

All right, put your notes away. We are going to have a pop quiz. Mark the answer from the Kentucky Education Professional Standards Board which best describes you: "(1) I am not aware of any ways the Internet can be used with students in my classroom; (2) I occasionally allow my students to use the Internet to find information; (3) I know a variety of projects and activities that effectively use the Internet to instruct and involve students. I know a source for collaborative projects, can direct students to on-line tutorials, learning resources, etc.; (4) I can design and implement an Internet project or maintain an educational Internet site."

Chances are good that, if you are under 30, you not only answered (3) or (4) but you can probably quiz out of the rest of this article. Otherwise, some of the more advanced basics of Internet searching described below may prove helpful.

Today, teachers are expected to make use of a tool, the Internet, that, except for those graduated in the last seven or eight years, was not part of their own educational experience. The fact that information available online doubles every 100 days underscores the importance of mastering the basics of effective Internet searching. Otherwise, the teacher is placed in the embarrassing

position of being less able to locate information than the student.

For purposes of this discussion, I'll assume you are doing your searching with the "advanced" search capability of Google.com. I prefer Google because it is designed and managed by reference librarians and is speech friendly.

If you are looking for a phrase or other words that always appear together, you probably know you should enclose the words within quotation marks. Search for the words blind and teacher, and you'll receive just under one million hits, the number of pages that have blind and teacher appearing somewhere on the page. Placing these two words in quotation marks, however, causes the search engine to only find contiguous occurrences of the phrase "blind teachers"; consequently, the number of hits drops to 1,800.

You can, however, target your search more carefully by use of the NEAR operator. NEAR (always in caps) permits you to search for two words in close proximity, instead of simply on the same page or within the same phrase. To search for pages about elementary school teachers who are also blind, you might add NEAR so that the search box would read:

"blind teacher" NEAR "elementary school". This returns a more manageable 163 hits. NEAR must be capitalized so

that the search engine knows that you do not want to search for the word "near."

If you want to widen your search instead, you have the OR command at your disposal. Be sure to type it in capital letters. For example, a search for "blind teachers" OR "professors" will locate pages with references to either blind teachers or blind professors.

All major search engines allow you to limit searches by ruling out pages that might contain specific words. To do so, put a minus sign directly in front of the word you do not want to see.

For instance, "blind teachers" -university would be designed to exclude pages about blind university teachers. Note that there is no space between the minus sign and the word that follows.

You can also use the tilde shortcut that Google unveiled in September. If you put the tilde symbol in front of your keyword Google will search for common synonyms. That is, searching for "high-school teachers" ~blind will identify pages with references to teachers who are visually impaired, low vision, etc.

Sometimes it seems like overkill to search the entire Web when all you really want is an academic or noncommercial take on a topic. Say you only want results from the .edu domain. Try using the syntax tool called "site:" and restrict the results to those which are from educational institutions. A search like:

"special education" SITE:edu

pulls up only those pages posted at educational sites.

There may, however, be times when conventional searching locates only one useful site on your topic, even though you are sure there has to be much more on the Web. An alternative strategy is to locate sites that link to the site you have already found. Unfortunately, Google is not the easiest means for conducting searches for such links (known as Uniform Resource Locators, or URL's). I prefer AlltheWeb.com for this type of search. At AlltheWeb, simply plug the URL into the search window on the home page and you will get a list of sites linking to your original site. For example, entering acb.org brings up a page with a link to "all external web pages that link" to the ACB site, including some gems difficult to find by conventional search techniques.

If you are interested in more sophisticated search strategies, go to Search Engine Watch at searchenginewatch.com/facts/ and go to the section on "Web searching tips." Experiment with these search techniques as well as those described above. In a

surprisingly short time, you will be conducting searches much more quickly and easily and receiving vastly improved results. Efficient searching is one of the easiest computer related skills for a blind teacher to master and one which you will probably do as well, if not better, than sighted colleagues.

TEACHER'S AID:
THE RUNDOWN ON READERS
By Carla Hayes

One of the most challenging tasks for blind teachers is choosing good readers and working with them effectively. You will need someone to help you correct papers, take care of routine clerical work, read school mail, browse through catalogs of educational supplies, and help you with other miscellaneous tasks which require reading. Perhaps it would work best for you to have more than one reader, or maybe your aide can help you with some of the reading. From time to time, friends and family members may be able to help you out, but it would not be fair to expect them to do it on a permanent basis. However you decide to do it, if you cannot read print, you will need help along these lines.

The first thing you will have to decide is whether to have a paid reader or a volunteer. There are advantages to both. The most obvious advantage to having a volunteer reader is that it will not cost you anything. On the other hand, paid

readers are generally more reliable. If you decide to pay someone, you can take your reader's fees as a deduction on your income tax because it could be considered a necessary, work-related expense.

The next challenge you will face will be finding a reader. There are several alternatives. First, you could advertise for a reader. If you live near a college or university, you could contact the education department or the department for whatever subject you are teaching, place an ad in the student newspaper, or notify the office of student employment. Explain that you are looking for a reader and ask if there is a student who might want to earn a few extra bucks. A third alternative is contacting your rehabilitation agency. It may have ideas for finding readers; it may even know of a grant or a state program which might pay your reader's fees. Another idea is to ask some of your visually impaired friends where they found their readers. If you are interested in volunteer readers, you may contact a local church, a college sorority or fraternity, the local Lions Club and other community service organizations. Whether you choose to have a paid or volunteer reader, it is best if the person knows the subject you are teaching. If your needs are complex, it will be more challenging to find someone who can do the job effectively. For example, being a foreign language teacher, I require a reader who knows Spanish, French, and German, or a combination of people who can help me with these languages. I have never been able to find one reader who could do all the languages, but I have hired such people as foreign exchange students,

bilingual immigrants, and a retired foreign language teacher; often I must have separate readers for each language.

If possible, interview potential readers before making a final decision. Have them read material which is typical of what you will be giving them and have them correct sample papers. When selecting a reader, you will want someone who is proficient and efficient. An incompetent reader could mean lots of wasted time and money. Also, look for someone who you think will work well with you. It is also a good idea to have more than one reader lined up, just in case of an emergency. Finally, it is usually best to hire someone who doesn't know your students; this way, your reader will not be biased about any particular students.

There are ways of using your reader's time more efficiently, thus saving you money. First, instead of having him or her read every test aloud to you, make an answer key for the test. Correct the first few tests with the reader, pointing out how you want things marked right or wrong, the number of points which should be deducted for each type of mistake, etc. Then, allow the reader to use the answer key to correct a few papers. Obviously, this is not advisable for essay exams. Check those papers with the reader to make sure that they were correct according to your instructions. If the reader has followed your instructions and everything has gone well, allow him or her to continue correcting the papers using the answer key. Be available to answer any questions. After a while, the reader will get the feel for how you correct papers and grade students' work and will not

need your help as often. Second, if you assign long compositions which must be graded, have the students read them on tape in addition to submitting the print copies. Listen to the tapes and grade the compositions for content and grammar. Type your comments about the compositions on separate sheets of paper. All your reader will have to do is correct the compositions for punctuation and spelling and attach your typed remarks to each composition. Third, instead of having your reader dictate test grades to you while you write them into your grade book, have him or her read them on tape. Then, you can copy them from the tape at your leisure and you won't have to pay the reader for the time it takes to write them down. On the tape, instruct the reader to include such things as the most frequently made mistakes, comments about neatness, etc. Fourth, if your school allows it, adopt a "no name, no credit" policy. This way, the reader won't have to waste valuable time trying to figure out whose paper is whose. Finally, instead of having your reader make extra trips to your house delivering test papers several times a week, he or she can read the test grades on the phone, and you can use your answering machine or a telephone recording device to record your conversation. Then, test papers are delivered only once a week, saving both time and money.

In short, working with a reader will help you to be a more efficient and competent teacher. Good, reliable readers are hard to find, but they are out there. One must only look.

WELCOME TO HOLLAND
By Emily Perl Kingsley
Submitted by Marcia Dresser

[The following was written by a mother about her experience raising a child with a disability.]

I am often asked to describe the experience of raising a child with a disability--to try to help people who have not shared that unique experience to understand it, to imagine how it would feel. It's like this.....

When you're going to have a baby, it's like planning a fabulous vacation trip--to Italy. You buy a bunch of guide books and make your wonderful plans. The Coliseum. The Michelangelo David. The gondolas in Venice. You may learn some handy phrases in Italian. It's all very exciting.

After months of eager anticipation, the day finally arrives. You pack your bags and off you go. Several hours later, the plane lands. The stewardess comes in and says, "Welcome to Holland."

"Holland?!?" you say. "What do you mean Holland?? I signed up for Italy! I'm supposed to be in Italy. All my life I've dreamed of going to Italy."

But there's been a change in the flight plan. They've landed in Holland and there you must stay.

The important thing is that they haven't taken you to a horrible, disgusting, filthy place, full of pestilence, famine and disease. It's just a different place.

So you must go out and buy new guide books. And you must learn a whole new language. And you will meet a whole new group of people you would never have met.

It's just a different place. It's slower-paced than Italy, less flashy than Italy. But after you've been there for a while and you catch your breath, you look around ... and you begin to notice that Holland has windmills ... and Holland has tulips. Holland even has Rembrandts.

But everyone you know is busy coming and going from Italy ... and they're all bragging about what a wonderful time they had there. And for the rest of your life, you will say "Yes, that's where I was supposed to go. That's what I had planned."

And the pain of that will never, ever, ever, ever go away ... because the loss of that dream is a very very significant loss.

But ... if you spend your life mourning the fact that you didn't get to Italy, you may never be free to enjoy the very special, the very lovely things ... about Holland.

THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD III

[The following is the third and final part of a compilation of student bloopers collected from actual 8th grade to college writing from students throughout the United States by Richard Lederer, St. Paul's School.]

* * *

During the Renaissance, America began. Christopher Columbus was a great navigator who discovered America while cursing about the Atlantic. His ships were called the Nina, the Pinta, and the Santa Fe. Later the Pilgrims crossed the Ocean, and this was called the Pilgrim's Progress. When they landed at Plymouth Rock, they were greeted by Indians, who came down the hill rolling their war hoops before them. The Indian squabs carried porposies on their backs. Many of the Indian heroes were killed, along with their cabooses, which proved very fatal to them. The winter of 1620 was a hard one for the settlers. Many people died and many babies were born. Captain John Smith was responsible for all this.

* * *

One of the causes of the Revolutionary Wars was the English put tacks in their tea. Also, the colonists would send their parcels through the post without stamps. During the War, Red Coats and Paul Revere were throwing balls over stone walls. The dogs were barking and the peacocks crowing. Finally, the colonists won the War and no longer had to pay for taxis.

* * *

Delegates from the original thirteen states formed the Contented Congress. Thomas Jefferson, a Virgin, and Benjamin Franklin were two singers of the Declaration of Independence. Franklin had gone to Boston carrying all his clothes in his pocket and a loaf of bread under each arm. He invented electricity by rubbing cats backwards and declared "a horse divided against itself cannot stand." Franklin died in 1790 and is still dead.

* * *

George Washington married Matha Curtis and in due time became the Father of Our Country. Then the Constitution of the United States was adopted to secure domestic hostility. Under the Constitution the people enjoyed the right to keep bare arms.

* * *

Abraham Lincoln became America's greatest Precedent. Lincoln's mother died in infancy, and he was born in a log cabin which he built with his own hands. When Lincoln was President, he wore only a tall silk hat. He said, "In onion there is strength." Abraham Lincoln wrote the Gettysburg address while traveling from Washington to Gettysburg on the back of an envelope. He also signed the Emasculation Proclamation, and the Fourteenth Amendment gave the exNegroes citizenship. But the Clue Clux Clan would torcher and lynch the exNegroes and other innocent victims. On the night of April 14, 1865, Lincoln went to the theater and got shot in his seat by one of the actors in a moving picture show. The believed assassin was John Wilkes Booth, a supposedly insane actor. This ruined Booth's career.

* * *

The nineteenth century was a time of many great inventions and thoughts. The invention of the steamboat caused a network of rivers to spring up. Cyrus McCormick invented the McCormick Raper, which did the work of a hundred men. Samuel Morse invented a code for telepathy. Louis Pastuer discovered a cure for rabbis. Charles Darwin was a naturailst who wrote the "Organ of the Species". Madman Curie discovered radium. And Karl Marx became one of the Marx Brothers.

* * *

The First World War, cause by the assignation of the Arch-Duck by a surf, ushered in a new error in the anals of human history.

BULLETIN BOARD

Compiled By Carla Hayes

Attention rehabilitation teachers! There's a discussion group just for you! The RT-L is the rehabilitation teachers and professionals electronic discussion list on the Internet. It's easy to join. To subscribe to RT-L, address an Email message to: listserv@umbsky.cc.umb.edu. In the body of your e-mail message, type the following command: SUBSCRIBE RT-L (your first name and last name). Once you have subscribed, you can read messages from fellow subscribers. You can also send messages to others on the list by addressing your comments and questions to: rt-l@umbsky & .cc.umb.edu. If you have any questions or need assistance signing on, contact the list owner of RT-L, Bob McCulley, via e-mail at either mcculley@umbsky.cc.umb.edu or at rt-lrequest@u & mbsky.cc.umb.edu.

* * *

Two new braille transcription services are now available to assist in creating braille in specialized formats. BrailleWright specializes in braille music, and has many

transcriptions already available for tuba, French horn, clarinet, piano, violin, voice, and music theory. Contact Sari Wright, certified literary and music braille transcriber, at PO. Box 77546, Toronto, Ontario M3H 6A7 Canada. Phone: (416) 633-3104. e-mail: brailleslw@look.ca.

Dots is a braille transcription service that specializes in mathematics and scientific Materials, such as algebra, geometry, calculus, and chemistry. It also creates maps and other graphics. Contact Nan Mills-Smith, certified braille transcriber, Phone: (757) 766-0208. e-mail: nanmillsmi@aol.com . Web Site: www.braillewithnan.net.

* * *

Are you in the market for a new computer and/or the latest and greatest adaptive hardware and software? Easy Talk Computers can meet all your needs! Robert Miller, the founder and proprietor of the business, Will build a state-of-the-art computer to your specifications, complete with all the adaptive hardware, software, and programs that you will need. With each system that he builds, Mr. Miller provides a customized tutorial tape with step-by-step instructions for setting up and operating your computer. He also provides excellent, ongoing technical support for all the products he sells. My laptop computer came from Easy Talk Computers, and I highly recommend this company. For more information, contact Easy Talk Computers, 2201 Limerick Drive, Tallahassee, FL 32309. Phone: (850) 906-9821. e-mail: Easyt_&_alk@earthlink.net. Visit their

accessible, easy-to-navigate web Site:
www.easytalkcomputers.com.

* * *

Most people associate the American Printing House for the Blind with braille publications. However, it also publishes a number of high quality large print books and maps, and it produces a number of educational aids for students of all ages. For more information or a catalog, contact: American Printing House for the Blind, 1839 Frankfort Avenue, PO. Box 6085, Louisville, KY 40206-0085. Phone: (Customer Service) (800) 223-1839. (Sales) (800) 572-0844. FAX: (502) 899-2274.

Another source for large print books is Library Reproduction Service (LRS), 14214 S. Figueroa Street, Los Angeles, CA 90061-1034. Phone: (800) 255-5002.

TEACHING MATH THROUGH THE YEARS

Teaching Math in 1960:

A logger sells a truckload of lumber for \$100. His cost of production is $\frac{4}{5}$ of the price. What is his profit?

* * *

Teaching Math in 1980:

A logger sells a truckload of lumber for \$100. His cost of production is \$80 and his profit is \$20. Your assignment: Underline the number 20.

* * *

Teaching Math in 1990:

By cutting down beautiful forest trees, the logger makes \$20. What do you think of this way of making a living? Topic for class participation after answering the question: How did the forest birds and squirrels "feel" as the logger cut down the trees? There are no wrong answers.

* * *

Teaching Math in 1996:

By laying off 40% of its loggers, a company improves its stock price from \$80 to \$100. How much capital gain per share does the CEO make by exercising his stock option at \$80? Assume capital gains are no longer taxed, because this encourages investment.

* * *

Teaching Math in 1997:

A company out-sources all of its loggers. The firm saves on benefits, and when the demand for its product is down, the

logging work force can easily be cut back. The average logger employed by the company earned \$50,000, had three weeks vacation, a nice retirement plan and medical insurance. The contracted logger charges \$50 an hour. Was out-sourcing a good move?

* * *

Teaching Math in 1998:

A laid-off logger with four kids at home and a ridiculous alimony from his first failed marriage comes into the logging company corporate offices and "goes postal," mowing down 16 executives and a couple of secretaries, and gets lucky when he nails a politician on the premises. Was out-sourcing the loggers a good move for the company?

* * *

Teaching Math in 1999:

A laid-off logger serving time in Folsom for blowing away several people is being trained as a COBOL programmer in order to work on Y2K projects. What is the probability that the automatic cell doors will open on their own as of 00:01, 01/01/00?

* * *

Teaching Math in 2000:

A logger sells a truckload of lumber for \$100. His cost of production is \$120. How does Arthur Andersen determine that his profit margin is \$60?

FROM THE BACK OF THE CLASS

The children were lined up in the cafeteria of a Catholic elementary school for lunch. At the head of the table was a large pile of apples. The nun made a note, and posted it on the apple tray: "Take only ONE. God is watching." Moving further along the lunch line, at the other end of the table was a large pile of chocolate chip cookies. A child had written a note:

"Take all you want. God is watching the apples."

* * *

[The following anecdote was related by one of our members at the last convention.]

In an effort to acquaint the children with different professions, a police officer was invited to speak at an elementary school. All of the grades were called together for the special event. The officer displayed his Billy club, gun, etc. Finally, when he held up the handcuffs, one little girl, whose mother was one of the teachers in the audience,

waved her hand frantically and announced, "My mommy and daddy have one of those."

* * *

[Below are actual excuses sent to school by parents (including original spellings), collected by Nisheeth Parekh, University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston.]

My son is under a doctor's care today and should not take P.E. today. Please execute him.

Dear School: Please ekscuse John for being absent on Jan. 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, and also 33.

Please excuse Gloria from Jim today. She is administrating.

Chris will not be in school because he has an acre in his side.

Please excuse Jennifer for missing school yesterday. We forgot to get the Sunday paper off the porch and when we found it Monday, we thought it was Sunday.

Please excuse Ray Friday from school. He has very loose vowels.

Please excuse Roland from P.E. for a few days. Yesterday he fell out of a tree and misplaced his hip.

Please excuse Jimmy for being. It was his father's fault.

Sally won't be in school a week from Friday. We have to attend her funeral.

Please excuse Jason for being absent yesterday. He had a cold and could not breed well.

Please excuse Mary for being absent yesterday. She was in bed with gramps.

Gloria was absent yesterday as she was having a gangover.

Please excuse Burma, she has been sick and under the doctor.

Maryann was absent December 11-16, because she had a fever, sore throat, headache and upset stomach. Her sister was also sick, fever and sore throat, her brother had a low grade fever and ached all over. I wasn't the best either, sore throat and fever. There must be something going around, her father even got hot last night.

* * *

"Index of Forbidden Books for Children," which appears on the Web site of The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions:

The Boy Who Died From Eating All His Vegetables
Curious George and the High-Voltage Fence
Eggs, Toilet Paper, and Your School
Fun Four-letter Words to Know and Share
The Little Sissy Who Snitched
Places Where Mommy and Daddy Hide Neat Things
Pop! Goes The Hamster ... And Other Great Microwave Games
The Pop-Up Book of Human Anatomy
Some Kittens Can Fly
Strangers Have the Best Candy
Whining, Kicking, and Crying to Get Your Way
Why Can't Mr. Fork and Ms. Electrical Outlet Be Friends?

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Membership Application

1. Name:
2. Mailing address:
3. Phone (optional):
4. How would you prefer to receive the NABT newsletter (B Braille, E e-mail, P large Print)?
5. What type of membership would you like: T teacher (\$25.); S student (\$10.); A associate - nonteacher (\$20.); I institutional (\$50.)?
6. Are you legally blind or sighted?
7. In what type of setting do you teach (01 public elementary; 02 public secondary; 03 college; 04 residential school; 05 teacher of blind and visually impaired adults; 06 teacher of blind and visually impaired children; 07 retired)?
8. What are your areas of teaching specialty (i.e., history, special ed., etc.)?
- 9e-mail (optional)

Checks should be made payable to NABT and sent to John Buckley, 7700 Gleason Dr., Apt. 33N, Knoxville, TN 37919.

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INTERNET 102:

EVALUATING INFORMATION ON THE WEB

John Buckley

The best thing about the Web is that anybody can "publish" anything. Unfortunately, the worst thing about the Web is that anybody can "publish" anything. That is, unlike journal articles and books that go through an editorial process and peer review, anyone at a computer can publish a Web site. In the last issue of *The Blind Teacher*, I discussed the basics of effective searching. Now, I would like to suggest ways of evaluating what you get in those searches.

It may be helpful to remember that the Web is more useful in locating some types of information than others. It is especially appropriate for finding government information: state, national, and international statistics; brief reports; and studies of news and current events; press releases; information on educational institutions, companies, and non-profit organizations; selected electronic journals and texts; and reference works, such as encyclopedias and dictionaries.

Refereed publications, professional journals, magazines, and books still under copyright are not generally good candidates for Web searching.

This having been said, how do you distinguish the authoritative and trustworthy sites from ones that aren't? Below are some guidelines recommended by universities for faculty and students of all ages:

1. Follow links from one reputable Web site to another. One good Web site will often lead to many similar sites.
2. Visit the home page of a professional or research organization that is doing work in an area that ties into your topic. They also tend to recommend sites they feel are reputable.
3. Look for references to Web sites in journal articles. It's becoming common for authors to include Web sites in their bibliographies.
4. Use a subject index or directory like Yahoo!. (More about this in a future issue.)
5. Use a search engine like Alta Vista, Excite or Infoseek.
6. Join a listserv or mailing list about your topic. Online discussion groups often share information about helpful resources. For a searchable directory of listservs, visit Liszt at <http://www.liszt.com>.

To critically evaluate a site, do the following:

1. Identify the site's author. Are qualifications, experience, and/or institutional affiliation given? Determine who supports the site. If this information is not provided directly on the site's home page, you can frequently answer some of these questions by going to the "about us" link or something similar. Government sites end in ".gov;" non-profit organizations end in ".org;" university sites end in ".edu;" and commercial sites end in ".com." Information from a site labeled with the domain names ".org" or ".edu" may provide a different viewpoint on the information presented than a site labeled ".com."

2. Does the site meet the same tests you would apply to traditional library sources? For example, does the web site contain documented facts or personal opinion? Are sources of information cited? Did you get to this site via a link from a site you know and trust?

3. Does the presentation of the site reflect credibility? Does the site look as if it's been created by a professional (no typos, spelling errors or messiness)?

4. Is the site current? Is the content up to date? Are all the links on the page current or are there many dead ends? Is the date of creation or most recent revision clearly shown? The last date of a site's revision is usually shown at the bottom of the home page.

There are also some strategies to increase the dependability of what you find. If you are a member of a library, whether public or university, you can gain access to subscriber-only databases-- including popular ones like Medline Plus for medical information and Gale for business resources--from a remote location. This can be especially helpful for specialized subjects as well as topics where the timeliness or authoritativeness of research is critical. When conducting your own searches, it is important to remember that, while engines like Google's "advanced" search use excellent software for attempting to prioritize search results, sometimes the site you really want may not appear on the first page of results. Studies indicate that 85% of all users only read the first page of search results.

Finally, if you want to improve your students' ability to evaluate what they find on the Web, you may want to have them visit the University of Minnesota's "Library Research Guide." This site has eight modules designed to teach

library research techniques. The modules include "the process of choosing a topic; designing a research strategy; finding different kinds of sources such as articles, books and internet sites; evaluating sources; [and] essential citation information." Although some of the information is specific to the University of Minnesota's libraries, much of it can be applied to research in any library.

<http://tutorial.lib.umn.edu/>

WHEN I WAS IN SCHOOL

The following items will test both your age and how long you have been involved with education.

1. I have received textbooks on flexible disk.
2. My desk in elementary school had space for an inkwell.
3. I have used a reel-to-reel tape player.
4. Elementary school principals were women, usually unmarried, and high-school principals were men.
5. We prayed to begin the school day.
6. When we said the pledge of allegiance, the flag had less than 50 stars.
7. Sex education occurred outside of school and was usually provided by the older kids.
8. Teachers communicated with the office by sending notes which were carried by the "good girls" in the class.
9. I walked to school.
10. Drugs were purchased at a pharmacy and not in the restroom.
11. None of my teachers ever used a video.

12. My first recorded books were from RFB, not RFB&D.
13. The school office did not have a fax machine.
14. Jaws only referred to anatomy.
15. I have used a manual typewriter.
16. Elementary school teachers were infallible.
17. Everyone in high school knew who "the bad girls" were and what made them that way.
18. "Windows" was a PLURAL noun.
19. Serious math and science students carried slide rules.
20. In college, there were separate men's and women's dorms.
21. These dorms had curfews.
22. Coke was a soft drink.
23. Girls always wore dresses.
24. I never carried a backpack to class.
25. Latin was a standard part of the college prep curriculum.
26. We regularly practiced civil defense drills at school in case of nuclear attack.
27. Physical education was a required course in college.
28. I have attended a junior high school.
29. I have never had a textbook with a CD.
30. Truancy was considered a serious offense.
31. I have listened to the World Series on a transistor radio during school.
32. There was no Office of Disabled Student Services when I was in college.
33. I have used an abacus to learn math.
34. Wearing tennis shoes was not a fashion statement.
35. Boys took shop; girls took home economics.
36. Getting "stoned" referred to alcohol.

37. I learned to read with the "Dick and Jane" readers.

38. The problems in my arithmetic books involved hypothetical situations in which people bought and sold things for under 10 cents.

39. I remember listening to Alexander Scourby on Talking Books.

40. I have taken tests which were mimeographed.

TEACHER'S AID: MORE FAQS

Carla Hayes

About a year ago, I published a column containing several frequently asked questions which I received from blind students in education, blind and visually impaired teachers, school administrators, and teacher training personnel and my responses to those questions. I received a good deal of positive feedback on this column. In fact, several people suggested that I should run this type of column periodically. So, here are some more questions and answers.

Q. Should a blind teacher reveal his/her disability on a resume or job application? If so, how should this be done?

A. In my experience, it is usually not a good idea to reveal blindness or other disabilities on a job application. Doing so will probably relegate your application to the circular file, and it is unlikely that you will be considered for the position. On the other hand, most interviewers hate surprises. If you show up at an interview without any advanced warning about your disability, the interviewer will be overly distracted by your blindness and the interview will

probably not go well. So, what is one to do? I have resolved this problem by not completely hiding my blindness and, at the same time, not dwelling on it. Anyone who carefully reads my resume will learn that I attended the Western Pennsylvania School for Blind Children in Pittsburgh, PA. In my cover letter, I include the following statement: "Being totally blind since birth and having had several struggles in my own education has made me a much better teacher because it has given me a firsthand understanding of students with special needs." For the most part, this strategy has worked for me. Maybe I wasn't granted as many interviews, but the ones that I had were more worthwhile.

Q. I have lost a lot of my vision. I can still recognize colors and read print with magnification, but my vision loss has made some routine classroom tasks difficult. Do you have any general tips for teachers in this situation?

A. Your goal should be to maximize the use of your remaining vision without straining your eyes. Start by experimenting with the lighting in your classroom. If the glare from fluorescent lights bothers you, tinted prescription glasses may be in order. If a certain area of your classroom is too dark, a reading lamp could do wonders. If you are having difficulty seeing what you are writing on the board, experiment with different colored chalk boards and chalk. Perhaps white chalk on a green board isn't the best color contrast for you to see. To figure out which color contrast would be best for you, write on several different colors of construction paper with different colored crayons, so that when you then write on Color code books, binders, and

folders they can be recognized quickly and make labels with large, bold letters for boxes, shelves and work stations. Use colored boldpoint pens, markers, and highlighters generously. These are only a few ideas. In short, you will have to experiment with everything that is available until you find methods, materials, and modifications that work best for you. (See the Bulletin Board column for a list of companies that sell magnifying glasses and other low vision aids.)

Q. I am a totally blind public school teacher. At the end of the school day, my desk is covered with print papers. It takes my reader forever to go through them. Do you have any suggestions?

A. You know about UFOs? Well, I refer to these papers as UPOs (unidentified printed objects). Here is what I do to minimize my UPOs. First, I have a rule in my classroom that nobody is allowed to put papers on my desk. Instead, students and others hand me the papers and identify them so that I can file them immediately. This eliminates most of my UPOs. Second, as my school mail is read to me, I label in braille each paper that I must keep so that it doesn't turn into a UPO. Finally, if I find a UPO after all of this, it gets filed in my UPO folder. I periodically go through this folder with my reading machine, and my reader only has to help me with the papers that the machine doesn't recognize. This strategy works well for me; there are usually very few papers in my UPO folder.

Q. How can a teacher who has been totally blind since birth compensate for his/her lack of firsthand visual knowledge of the world when teaching certain concepts?

A. It can be a challenge for a teacher who has never had sight to explain certain visual concepts to students. Fortunately, today there are a lot of teaching aids which can help to bridge the gap. For example, educational documentaries with video description can greatly enhance classroom instruction. Described videos can be borrowed from many libraries or purchased directly from Descriptive Video Service. (For more information, see the Bulletin Board column.) In addition, every good teacher makes classroom presentations more interesting and informative through the use of pictures, maps, models, real objects, diagrams, computer programs, and creative bulletin board displays. These teaching aids can do a lot to compensate for a blind teacher's lack of firsthand visual knowledge of any subject.

I hope these questions and answers were helpful to you. If you have any questions or classroom techniques that you would like to share in this column, please contact me at 230 Robinhood Lane, McMurray, PA 15317. Phone: (724) 941-8184. Email lengual@concentric.net.

PROFESSOR SPEAK

There is often a discrepancy between what the teacher says to the class and what he/she really is thinking. Below are some examples of this kind of professionally appropriate double-speak.

The gist of what the author is saying is what's most important.

(I don't understand the details either.)

Today we'll let a member of the class lead the discussion. It will be a good educational experience.

(I stayed out too late last night to prepare and I have a wicked hangover.)

Various authorities agree that ...

(My hunch is that ...)

Today we are going to discuss a most important topic.

(Today we are going to discuss my dissertation.)

The answer to your question is beyond the scope of this class.

(I don't know.)

You'll have to see me during my office hours for a thorough answer to your question.

(I don't know.)

In answer to your question, you must recognize that there are several disparate points of view.

(I really don't know.)

Any questions?

(I'm ready to get out of here.)

We can continue this discussion outside of class.

(1. I'm tired of this--let's quit. 2. You're winning the argument--let's quit.)

The implications of this study are clear.

(I don't know what it means either, but there'll be a question about it on the test.)

Unfortunately, we haven't the time to consider all of the people who made contributions to this field.

(I disagree with what most of my colleagues in this field have said.)

You'll be using one of the leading textbooks in the field.

(1. It's the one I used as a grad student. 2. It's the one I wrote.)

The test scores were generally good.

(Some of you managed a C+.)

The test scores were a little below my expectations.

(Where was the party last night?)

Before we begin the lecture for today, are there any questions about previous material?

(Has anyone opened the book yet?)

It's been very rewarding to teach this class.

(I hope they find someone else to teach it next year.)

BULLETIN BOARD

Compiled by Carla Hayes

"Vistas: Adaptive Items for a More Independent Life," a catalog of products for people who are blind or visually impaired, is available from the Braille Institute. It contains several unique products, including large print King James bibles, \$21.95; large print American Heritage Basic Dictionaries, \$16.00; push-button padlocks, \$7.95; Bold line

writing pads, \$3.95; embossed writing pads, \$12.95; several types of writing guides and bold line pens; braille and large print computer keytop labels, \$26.95; braille instructional materials; full-page slates, \$35.95; other slates of various types and sizes; white canes; tape-recorders and accessories, and much more. This catalog is available in braille, large print, and cassette formats. For more information, contact:

Braille Institute, 741 North Vermont Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90029. Phone: (323) 663-1111, Ext. 1245. FAX: (323) 663-0867. Web Site: www.brailleinstitute.org.

* * *

Here are several resources for magnifying glasses and other low vision products. (1) American Printing House for the Blind, (800) 223-1839, www.aph.org. (2) Big Eye And Lamp: (732) 557-9400. (3) Braille Institute, (323) 663-1111, www.brailleinstitute.org. (4) Donegan Optical Company, (913) 492-2500, www.doneganoptical.com. (5) Eschenbach Optic of America, (800) 487-5389, www.eschenbach.com. (6) Independent Living Aids, (800) 537-2118, www.independentliving.com. (7) Noir Medical Technologies, (800) 521-9746, www.noirmedical.com. (8) Selsi Company, (201) 612-9200, www.selsioptics.com.

* * *

In addition to your favorite movies, Descriptive Video Service offers described versions of several science and

historical documentaries and children's programs which are ideal for classroom use. The Media Access Group at WGBH, Boston publishes its DVS Home Video Catalogue annually as well as the DVS Guide, a semi-annual publication that lists the television programs airing on PBS and other networks which contain video description. To request the latest DVS Guide or Home Video Catalogue in braille, call toll-free: (888) 818-1181. To request these publications in large print, call (888) 818-1999.

To hear an audio version of the catalogue, a demonstration of video description, or up-to-date program schedules and information about television programs containing description, call the DVS Information Line at (800) 333-1203. The latest DVS information can also be found at www.access.wgbh.org. To place an order, call (317) 379-0439. Their e-mail address is dvs@wgbh.org. Their mailing address is DVS Home Video, P.O. Box 55742, Indianapolis, IN 46205.

* * *

It's hard to believe that it's already time to file income taxes again! Under certain circumstances, it is possible for a blind teacher to take various out-of-pocket expenses, such as the purchase of classroom materials and readers' fees, as income tax deductions. For more information about deductions for teachers and other tax matters, visit the IRS Web site: www.irs.gov or call their toll-free number (800) 829-1040. On the web site, you can also subscribe to a service which will send you free tax tips by Email throughout

the year. The IRS will provide over 70 useful tax tips during the tax season alone.

* * *

And now, on a more pleasant topic, here's some good news.

"Accessworld," a magazine published by the American Foundation for the Blind since 2000, which provide the latest news about assistive technology for blind and visually impaired people, is now free of charge. Starting with the January 2004 issue, "Accessworld" will be available on AFB'S web site: www.afb.org. The January issue presents an extensive section on DAISY books and the current efforts to bring DAISY into the mainstream disability community in the United States.

PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE

At the mid-winter meeting, the officers and board voted to propose discontinuing offering life memberships in NABT. The primary reason for the change is life memberships are simply not financially sound for the organization. In order to break even, a life membership would have to be set at a price that was considered prohibitive. The NABT constitution requires notification of any proposed changes in the constitution in the newsletter prior to the convention, at which time the revision will be voted on at our regular business meeting.

FROM THE BACK OF THE CLASS

An elementary school teacher was explaining to her class that, when she was a child, Barney, the character on Public Television, hadn't been created. Mystified, one of the children said, "What do you mean they didn't have Barney when you were a kid? He's a dinosaur; he's been around for billions of years."

The following note appeared on the bulletin board in the teachers' lounge. "For all of you hard working teachers who get a headache at the end of a long day, take the advice on the aspirin bottle label word for word: `take 2, keep away from children`."

In an effort to provide art enrichment for kindergarteners, a primary school brings in a local artist once a month. She features a new artist each time, usually showing pictures of the artist. One month she did Pablo Picasso. The guest instructor held up one picture of Picasso (as a young man in a long dress/cloak) and asked the students to tell her what they saw. Most commented that he had a smile on his face or long hair. One child raised her hand and said, "Oh, he must be a cross-dresser."

A fourth-grade teacher was giving her pupils a lesson in logic. "Here is the situation," she said. "A man is standing up in a boat in the middle of a river, fishing. He loses his balance, falls in, and begins splashing and yelling for help. His wife hears the commotion, knows he can't swim, and

runs down to the bank. Why do you think she ran to the bank?"

A little girl raised her hand and asked, "To draw out all his savings?"

The teacher had asked the class to draw a picture representing some aspect of the holiday season. Most of the children drew pictures of snowmen, reindeer, and other traditional representations. One little boy, however, drew a picture that baffled the teacher. The child had clearly drawn a clean-shaven, overweight man in what appeared to be a business suit.

Finally, surrendering to her curiosity, she asked, "Who is this supposed to be?"

"Well," he beamed with pride, "that's `round John virgin`."

A young student in Great Britain, returning home from his first day at school, said to his mother, "Mum, what's sex?" His mother, who believed in all the most modern educational theories, gave him a detailed explanation, covering all aspects of the tricky subject. When she had finished, her son produced an enrollment form which he had brought home from school, and said, "Yes, but how am I going to get all that into this one little square?"

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MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

1. Name:
2. Mailing address:
3. Phone (optional):
4. e-mail (optional)
5. How would you prefer to receive the NABT newsletter (B Braille, E e-mail, P large Print)?
6. What type of membership would you like: T teacher (\$25.); S student (\$10.); A associate non-teacher (\$20.); I institutional (\$50.)?
7. Are you legally blind or sighted?
8. In what type of setting do you teach (01 public elementary; 02 public secondary; 03 college; 04 residential school; 05 teacher of blind and visually impaired adults; 06 teacher of blind and visually impaired children; 07 retired)?
9. What are your areas of teaching specialty (i.e., history, special ed., etc.)?

Checks should be made payable to NABT and sent to John Buckley, 1025 Ree Way, Knoxville, TN 37909.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello, everyone!

If you're like me, you're frantically trying to wrap everything up before school gets out. Every year, I think I won't succeed, but somehow I get it all done. This year has been quite challenging. I have just five students, and I see them often, so I've become very attached to them. Darcy * is graduating and plans to attend college in Connecticut; however, her family does not want her to leave home because she does most of the housework and takes care of her grandmother. Craig has multiple disabilities, and everyone agrees that he needs a residential placement for next year. Unfortunately, his school system has been procrastinating, so we have no idea where he'll end up next year. I've been trying to integrate braille into Courtney's program for the past two years, because she has 20/400 acuity in just one eye due to retinopathy of prematurity, and she tires easily. She's a visual learner, though. She uses large print and a CCTV, and she can read a paperback novel without magnification at 100 words per minute. I can't blame her for rejecting braille, but I worry about what will happen should her retina detach. Nancy moved here from New Hampshire last summer after suffering a stroke and losing all of her sight. For some reason I cannot fathom, her school system allowed her to sit in first grade until November with no braille instruction. Thankfully, her first grade teacher was wonderful, and her education

assistant is fantastic, so Nancy has made great strides since Thanksgiving, and is going on to second grade. She's still quite far behind, though, and I pray that she'll catch up without having to repeat a year somewhere down the road.

* Students' names have been changed.

Some of you may know that I'm a member of the BANA Early Literacy Materials Preparation committee. The group is comprised of teachers of the visually impaired and braille transcribers, and we've been charged with the task of trying to figure out how to represent the ever-increasing number of visual references in the textbooks of the early grades.

For example, if the instructions are to define the words in orange, how should we indicate which words are in orange? Should there be a color indicator, as some people suggest, or simply a transcriber's note that says, "The following words are written in orange."? Personally, I don't think we should add any more symbols to primary-grade books.

First- and second-graders have to learn all the braille contractions in addition to their spelling words; on top of that, they must grapple with literary and Nemeth numbers. If we complicate things even further, I'm afraid that students like Nancy, who are already struggling, will grow up hating to read, and I can't bear the thought of that.

We'll be discussing all of this again in Louisville June 21-23, and I'd greatly appreciate any thoughts or comments. My contact information is on the title page.

Finally, I have to say that, thanks to Carla Hayes, NABT has a very exciting program planned for our 2004

convention. Be sure to check out Carla's article for all the details.

I hope to see many of you in Birmingham. Have a wonderful, relaxing summer, and please keep in touch.

--Marcia Dresser

ALABAMA PANORAMA FOR NABT

Carla Hayes

The National Association of Blind Teachers has a very exciting program planned for Convention 2004. Here is our schedule for Convention week:

Sunday, July 4, 2004

8:00--9:30 PM. NABT Breakfast And Program. The title of our program will be: "From Sight to Insight: One Man's Journey." Listen as Carl Foley, Retired Mathematics Teacher, Adaptive Technology Specialist, and President of The Alliance on Aging and Vision Loss, tells how he gradually lost his vision and the techniques that he developed for coping.

9:45--11:00 AM. NABT Board Meeting (open to everyone).

5:30--7:00 PM. NABT Boxed Dinner and Social. Are you constantly late for the Sunday night general session because of slow service in the hotel restaurant? Never fear because NABT will be there to provide a quick boxed dinner and the opportunity to socialize with old friends and meet new ones before going to ACB'S opening session.

Tuesday, July 6, 2004.

1:30--2:30 PM. NABT Business Meeting. Come and share your ideas for our organization.

2:30--4:00 PM. "Education Can Begin At Home: A Panel Discussion On Home schooling." Are you dissatisfied with American public education and you can't afford to send your children to private school? Perhaps home schooling is an option for you. Learn all about home schooling from people who know about it firsthand. Our panelists will include: Carla Hayes, Home school Foreign Language Teacher, Lengua-Learn Communications; Carla Ruschival, who home schools her grandchildren; and George Abbott, Dean of Educational Programs and Instruction from the Hadley School for the Blind.

Wednesday, July 7, 2004.

1:30--3:00 PM. "What You Always Wanted To Know About Rehab But Were Afraid To Ask." Do you have questions about rehabilitation services, or just what it takes to be a rehab teacher or counselor? If so, this is a workshop just for you. Some of our panelists will include: Anne Elliott, Itinerant Rehab Teacher for the Blind and Visually Impaired; Donald J. Koors, Retired Consultant on Blindness and Visual Impairment, Deaf-blindness and Funding, and Coordination of Postsecondary Education; and Stephanie Hall, Rehabilitation Teacher from Vision Loss Resources in Minneapolis, MN.

As you can see, NABT has planned several fun and stimulating activities for this year's convention. Please come and join us. We'll see you there.

INFOEYES: A VIRTUAL REFERENCE SERVICE

Visually impaired persons in select libraries around the United States are participating in a six-month pilot project which officially opened on Monday, March 22, to test an online information and virtual reference service designed specifically for their needs. The service will be offered through InfoEyes, <http://www.infoeyes.org>, a virtual reference and information community for the visually impaired. Through the pilot project, visually impaired patrons will use QuestionPoint to work with librarians

virtually to find what they're seeking on the Internet. QuestionPoint, the collaborative virtual reference service developed by the Library of Congress and the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC), helps librarians track and manage questions from patrons through a network of reference librarians around the world. The Illinois State Library and the Illinois State Library Talking Book and Braille Service are coordinating the pilot project.

InfoEyes allows users to ask a librarian to help find information about absolutely anything from locating a list of symptoms for common eye diseases to finding a gingerbread cookie recipe. The service will enable users to interact with a librarian live and online via audio. As a result, you may actually hear a librarian's voice while they browse the Internet and chat with you.

Information and resources are sent directly to your computer. When activating the "Ask a Question via InfoEyes Live Reference Session" link, you will be prompted to download and install a plug-in that will allow you to participate in an InfoEyes Live Reference session.

Best of all, you can communicate online with audio, hearing a librarian's voice while he/she browses the Internet with you. The Web pages they go to will appear simultaneously on your computer screen. If you have a microphone, you can also speak directly to the librarian; if not, you can type your questions using text chat. If no one is available, you can e-mail your question to the staff. It

promises to respond within 48 hours. The hours of service will be posted on the InfoEyes Web site. If users would like service outside of these times, they may schedule an appointment or a reference session. If you need an individualized training session on how to search the Internet or conduct searches for reference information, you can contact the program at info@mitbc.

The project includes 12 libraries in 10 states and is coordinated by the Illinois State Library Talking Book and Braille Service. Users will be asked to evaluate the service and resources to help librarians further develop the program.

TEACHER'S AID: A SWOT ANALYSIS FOR TEACHERS

Carla Hayes

For me, the end of each school year is a time to sit back and take stock of how things went in my classroom over the previous nine months. I try to analyze what went right, what went wrong, and what I can do to improve as a teacher. This year, we are doing our 5-year evaluation and long-term plan for my school. At a recent faculty meeting, we started going through an interesting process called a SWOT analysis. As I was going through it with my colleagues, it occurred to me that a SWOT analysis could

also be a helpful tool for individual teachers to use to evaluate their performance and I have decided to use it for my own year-end evaluation. SWOT is an acronym with each of its letters standing for an element which is to be analyzed. Of the four elements, two are negative and two are positive. So, doing a SWOT analysis will give you a balanced and realistic assessment of what you are already doing right and what you can do to improve as a teacher. To do a SWOT analysis, make four lists, one for each element. Let's examine each of the four elements of the SWOT analysis carefully.

S stands for strengths. It's all too easy to focus exclusively on the negative and forget to accentuate the positive. This approach will be discouraging and counterproductive. However, in a SWOT analysis, you will start by listing your strengths as a teacher. These may include such things as enthusiasm, superior knowledge of your subject, dedication, organizational skills, and empathy for your students. It is important to make a detailed list of your strengths so that you can capitalize on them and continue to be successful.

W stands for Weaknesses. Of equal importance to your strengths is a list of the weaknesses that stand in the way of your success as a teacher. Examples of weaknesses may be a lack of computer training and equipment which could help you to do your job more efficiently, the inability to perform certain classroom tasks independently, a need to update your knowledge and skills in your subject area,

shaky classroom management skills, etc. Basically, a weakness is something that you can remedy which stands in the way of your success as a teacher.

The O of SWOT stands for Opportunities. An opportunity can be defined as any favorable situation which will contribute to your success, if you take advantage of it. For a teacher, opportunities may include such things as an increase in the school budget for educational aids and field trips, a promotion, the availability of a bigger or better classroom, a research grant, graduate-level classes in your field, etc. Always keep your eyes and ears open for opportunities and take advantage of every opportunity that you get.

Finally, the T in the word SWOT stands for Threats. A threat is any external situation that you cannot control which could be detrimental to you as a teacher. School budget cuts, difficult students, overcrowded classrooms, inaccessible materials and equipment, and school violence are examples of some of the threats which you may be facing as a teacher. It is important to make a list of your present and potential threats, even if you feel that you cannot do anything about them. By being aware of these threats, you can work around them and lessen their effect.

So, you have listed your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats as a teacher. Now what? The next step is to review and analyze all the items on each list.

Decide how you can capitalize on each of your strengths, take advantage of the opportunities, improve in your areas of weakness, and minimize the threats. As you are making these lists and formulating goals, it helps to prioritize the items on each list and the goals you wish to achieve. Finally, come up with an action plan. Begin by concentrating on the high-priority items first. Then, work your way down to the lower-priority items.

To show how the SWOT analysis might work, here is an example of how I am putting it to work for me. One of my weaknesses has always been my lack of computer skills. This year, our principal decided to require all the teachers to post their homework assignments on the school's website. To make matters worse, our website is extremely graphical and difficult for a blind computer user to navigate. The inaccessibility of the website and my lack of computer skills makes this situation a threat to me. An opportunity to address my problem came when my rehabilitation counselor contacted me and asked how I was doing. After I explained my problem to him, he arranged for my case to be reopened, making me eligible to receive assistance in obtaining adaptive technology, computer training, and other post-employment services.

Meanwhile, I am capitalizing on two of my strengths: flexibility and perseverance. Until I receive my training, I am being flexible by submitting my assignments on disk so that someone can paste them onto my Web page for me. Since I don't like asking others to do my work for me, I will

persevere until I find a way to perform this task independently.

A few final notes. A good SWOT analysis will take a lot of thought, time, and writing. Also, make sure that you put your action plan into effect. Otherwise, all of your hard work will be a waste of time. In conclusion, your SWOT analysis should be an ongoing process. In order to be successful in teaching and in life, you must constantly evaluate your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Remember that strengths and weaknesses are generally internal matters which you can control. On the other hand, opportunities and threats are external situations of which you will have little control. Success comes to those who capitalize on their strengths, improve in their areas of weakness, take advantage of every opportunity, and minimize their threats.

RELIGION (SORT OF) IN THE CLASSROOM

The following is excerpted from Anders Henriksson's Non Campus Mentis, (RC 54419). The book reprints answers that have been given on blue book exams by college students from more than 20 North American universities. The actual spelling has been retained.

* * *

Bible legend states that the trouble started after Eve ate the golden apple of discord. This was the forbidding fruit. Man fell from the space of grace. It was mostly downhill skiing from there.

* * *

The history of the Jewish people begins with Abraham, Isaac, and their twelve children. Judyism was the first monolithic religion. It had one big god named "Yahoo." Old Testament profits include Moses, Amy, and Confucius, who believed in Fidel piety. One of the only reasons Confucius was born was because of a Chinese tradition.

* * *

Moses was told by Jesus Christ to lead the people out of Egypt into the Saharia dessert. The Book of Exodus describes this trip and the amazing things that happened on it, including the Ten Commandments, various special effects, and the building of the Suez Canal. Forty centuries later, they arrived in Canada. This was the promised land of milk and chocolate. Noah's ark came to its end near Mt. Arafat. Joan of Ark was famous as Noah's wife. David was a fictional character in the Bible who fought with Gilgamesh while wearing a sling. He pleased the people and saved them from attacks by the Philippines.

* * *

Christianity was just another mystery cult until Jesus was born. The mother of Jesus was Mary, who was different from other women because of her Immaculate Conception. Mary and Joseph went from inn to inn trying to find a place for Jesus to be born but they were refused everywhere because they were Jewish. Eventually, Christians started the new religion with sayings like "The mice shall inherit the earth." Later Christians, fortunately, abandoned this idea. Romans persecuted Christians by lionizing them in public stadiums. Among the things that helped Christianity to grow was the promise of an eternal afterward.

* * *

St. Augustine became a pillar in the Christian church. St. Jerome refused to believe in sex. The Arians denied the holy triangle. St. Benedict gave his monks a set of punitive rules to enjoy.

Christianity finally became official after the Emperor Constantine's famous Decree of Consternation. Constantine became a Christian himself after being pursued by a neon cross on the battlefield. The entire city of Constantinople rose up with a tremendous ejaculation every time the Emperor came.

BULLETIN BOARD

Compiled by Carla Hayes

"The Student Guide to Financial Aid," and many other useful publications are available online from the Federal Citizen Information Center Web site:

www.pueblo.gsa.gov/online.htm. Call (888) 878-3256 toll-free to order publications in print for a nominal fee. Some of these include information on financial planning for college, the ADA, employment interviewing, tips for finding the right job, computers and the Internet, a guide to disability rights and laws and much more. Also, if you have questions about federal programs or services, call the Federal Information Center's toll-free number: (800) 333-4636 Monday to Friday between 8 AM and 8 PM Eastern Time.

* * *

Here are five homework Web sites which could be useful to both students and teachers:

- (1) www.bigchalk.com (You can search this site by grade level or subject.)
- (2) www.lii.org (This is the Librarians' Index website. It contains useful reference materials and information.)
- (3) www.sparknotes.com (This site is especially good for English literature classes.)
- (4) www.mathforum.org/drmath (This site is searchable by level.)

- (5) www.historychannel.com (A great link to the History Channel's program schedules, study guides and supplementary information.)

* * *

Applause Learning Resources markets foreign language teaching materials for such languages as Spanish, French, German, Latin and Japanese. Materials include textbooks, dictionaries, audio tapes, flash cards and more. To obtain a catalog or more information contact: Applause Learning Resources, 85 Fernwood Lane, Roslyn, NY 11576-1431. Phone: (800) 277-5287. Website: www.applauselearning.com.

* * *

Toys, children's musical instruments, crafts, science projects, drawing books and much more is available from Heart Songs. For more information, call (800) 325-2502. FAX: (800) 638-5102. Visit their website: www.heartsongs.com.

* * *

"Braille Literacy: A Functional Approach," is a new release from AFB Press. Dr. Diane Wormsley, author of "Braille Literacy Curriculum," and co-author of "Instructional Strategies For Braille Literacy" presents a straightforward, step-by-step approach to teaching the

reading and writing of braille to both children and adults. Key areas covered in the book include: creating braille-rich environments, selecting and teaching key words, creating stories with learners, keeping records, and much more. There are also suggestions for teaching students with learning disabilities and other special needs students. For more information about this book and other AFB Press publications, contact AFB Press at (800) 232-3044 or visit their website: www.afb.org/store.

CONVENTION ORIENTATION

Granger Ricks

The familiar sound of automatic sliding glass doors will greet us as we near the entrance to the Sheraton Hotel tower. As we move through the entrance toward the registration desk, it is useful to know that the general shape of the lobby area is a long rectangle extending north (to your left) and south (to your right). The registration desk is straight ahead about 50 feet to the east. The wide tiled area which we are crossing runs to the right to a set of double glass doors leading outside. If we turned to our right at about 25 feet after we have entered the lobby and walked toward these doors, we will pass seating areas on our left and right and shortly thereafter we come to an alcove on our right containing a horseshoe-shaped group of five elevators. By means of these five elevators, one may access all sixteen floors of the Hotel Tower.

Returning to the walkway as we stood facing the registration desk with our backs to the entrance, to our left (and to the north) we can hear the constant and comforting sound of an escalator. This escalator takes us up to the main floor of the Atrium Tower. This "main" floor of the Atrium Tower is really the second floor. There is no third floor in the Atrium Tower. In fact, the Hotel Tower and the Atrium Tower are two adjoining buildings, but the second and third floor of the Hotel Tower do not connect to the Atrium Tower. It is only from the fourth floor up that the corridors of the two towers join. The Atrium Tower has no third floor. The important thing to remember is that it is the second floor of the Atrium that takes us to the skywalk and, through the skywalk, to the convention center complex. Here in this area called the exhibit halls we will find ballroom, exhibits, convention information services, and the ACB Caf, (formerly known as Quick Meals).

The skywalk is accessible only on the second level of the Atrium Building. Navigating through the large open business concourse on the second level of the Atrium Tower, therefore, and hooking up with the skywalk leading to the convention center is going to be our greatest challenge.

Returning to our escalator which we ascended from the lobby, and continuing straight ahead, we pass a bank of three elevators on the left that serve the Atrium Tower. As

we move forward, the wall on our right ends. Here we continue walking until we eventually come to a railing. This railing forces us to make a turn to the right. At this point, we find ourselves in a wide curving pedestrian walkway and we become aware of the open-air sound of the Atrium. This pedestrian walkway leading through the business concourse of the Atrium Tower is flanked on each side with restaurants, shops, a Sports bar, and a staircase going down which serves no purpose for us except as a landmark. The staircase railing, which we should now follow on our left, protects us from a tiered waterfall and the set of stairs leading down on our left. Before the rail ends, it makes a slight curve to the left. If we continue in the same direction the rail is pointing, we will be able to walk past the cafe seating of the Atrium Restaurant on the left, and the walk-up counter of the Cafe Siena on the right. The openness of the Atrium can still be felt as we continue past the open air Atrium Restaurant and the walk-up counter of the Cafe Siena.

After passing these eateries, we begin to notice an absence of the openness we have felt on the pedestrian walkway since the ceiling becomes much lower here. This is our cue to turn to the left to walk toward and enter the skywalk. If we go too far before we make that left turn, the tile floor will give way to carpet.

The skywalk is a glass-enclosed carpeted walk over Richard Arrington Jr. Boulevard. It has "wonderful jazz music quietly emanating throughout." Once you cross the

walk, you will be on the floor where the ballroom, exhibits, convention information services, and the ACB Caf, will be located.

After passing through the skywalk to the exhibition hall side, we find double doors that lead immediately to a short open staircase going down to level two of the convention center. From these steps, we must walk along a wall about 75 feet overlooking a large open staircase leading from level one to level two. At this point, where the wall ends, we reach a key junction where we can make several choices: (1) straight ahead is the ACB registration area; (2) angle to the right about 20 feet ahead and locate the escalators leading to the first and third levels where the meeting rooms are located; (3) angle 45 degrees to the left at this important junction and walk about 100 feet across a large carpeted open area to locate exhibition hall 2 where the general sessions will be held and exhibition hall 3 where the exhibits are located. Once in the exhibit hall, you may walk through to the ACB Caf,, or if you do not want to walk through exhibits to purchase a meal or a snack, the Caf, has a separate entrance just a few more paces away.

Of course, it might be added that this layout of the Sheraton Towers will make much more sense after we are home from the convention.

FROM THE BACK OF THE CLASS

A third-grade teacher had assigned her children to write a story titled, "My Biggest Surprise." Marina wrote: "I got up this morning and I ran into Mommy and Daddy's bed and hopped in. But it wasn't Mommy at all--it was Mrs. Del Campo!" When the parents finally read the essay at the end of the school year, the father phoned to tell the teacher that what their daughter had neglected to say was that the parents had called Mrs. Del Campo late at night to stay with their children while he took his wife to the hospital to have their third child.

* * *

A teacher overheard one of his middle-school students telling another, "It's not called cheating; it's called winning."

* * *

The regular first-grade teacher was taking leave for the birth of her baby. Her replacement, a young man just out of college, was introducing himself to the class. Perplexed by the transition, one young girl announced, "We didn't know you were a teacher. We thought you were a man." Another little boy rubbed more salt in the wound by asking, "Are you a Real Teacher?"

* * *

The following was posted on the bulletin board in the teachers' lounge:

If you agree with at least ten of the following, you are a real teacher.

1. You believe the staff room should be equipped with Valium.
2. You find humor in other people's stupidity.
3. You want to slap the next person who says, "Must be nice to work 8 to 3 and have summers free."
4. You believe chocolate is a food group.
5. You can tell it's a full moon without ever looking outside.
6. You believe "shallow gene pool" should have its own box on the report card.
7. When out in public, you feel the urge to snap your fingers at a child.
8. You have no time for a life from August through June.

9. Putting all "A's" on a report card would make your life SO much easier.
10. When you mention vegetables, you are not talking about food.
11. You think people should be required to get a government permit before being allowed to reproduce.
12. You believe in the aerial spraying of Prozac.
13. You have encouraged a parent to check into home schooling.
14. You believe no one should be permitted to reproduce without having taught in a middle school for at least five years.
15. You can "sense" gum.
16. You think caffeine should be available to staff in IV form.
17. Meeting a child's parents instantly answers the question, "Why is this kid like that?"
18. Your personal life comes to a screeching halt at report card time.

* * *

The fourth-grade class was studying the development of the auto industry. The teacher had emphasized the role played

by Henry Ford, whose assembly lines decreased production costs. At the end of the unit, she gave a test which included the question: "What did Henry Ford invent that made buying a car more affordable?"

One of the students responded: "0% financing."

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